Commentary

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Why We Still Need SDI
Robert Jastrow and Max M. Kampelman

The Strange Debate Over Bosnia
Joshua Muravchik

Columbus & the Jews
Jonathan D. Sarna

Is Cuba Next?
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The Burial Society
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Holy Hollywood!
Edward Norden

Exchanges on the L.A. Riots & the Kennedy Assassination

Books in Review: John Podhoretz / Walter Berns / Allan Nadler / Terry Eastland / Evelyn Toynton

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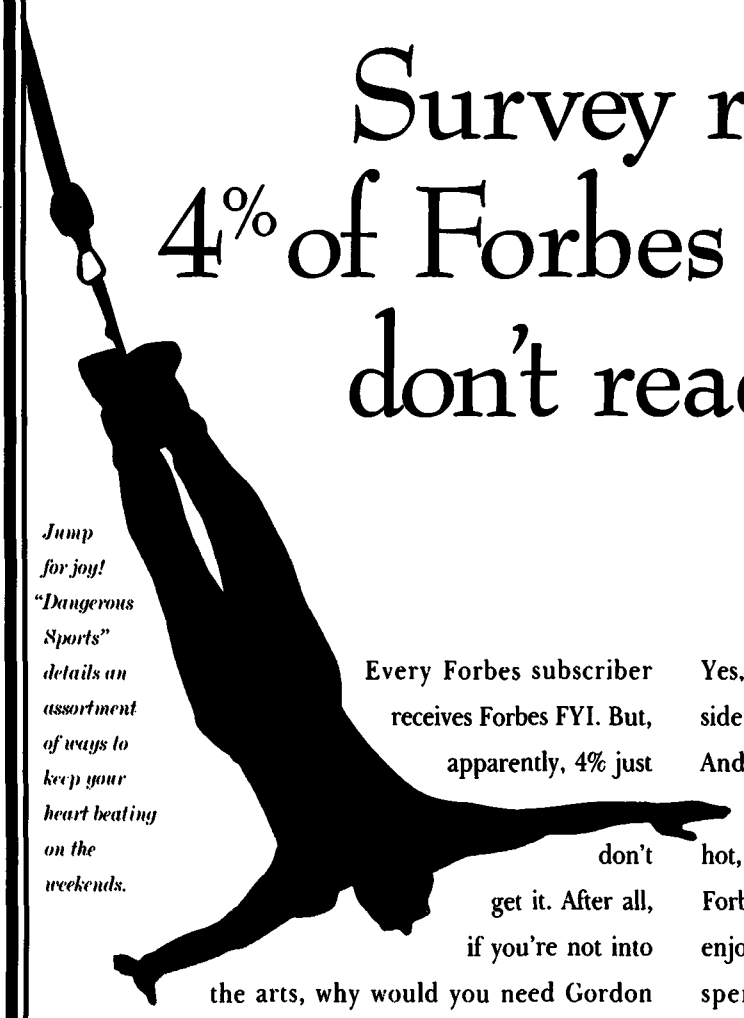

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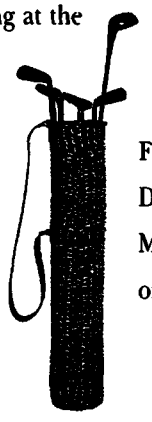

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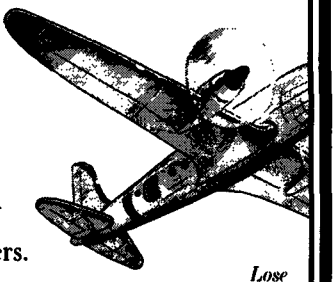

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Commentary

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Letters from Readers

The DLC

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

My contribution to the debate in your September issue ["Have the Democrats Really Changed?"] made the point that Governor Bill Clinton's success in obtaining the Democratic presidential nomination has meant that the single-issue groups representing the Left on our political spectrum, which had dominated Democratic conventions in the recent past, have lost out to the centrists. In that context I noted briefly the role played by the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC), an organization founded by Democratic centrists in 1985. The purpose of this letter is to add a few words about the Council.

Differing from the Coalition for a Democratic Majority (CDM), which sought to gather Democratic centrists in the 70's, the DLC has not limited itself to discussion of the issues—it has also gone about the creation of a grass-roots organization. Recognizing the irrelevance of what has remained of party organizations, the DLC has sought to build a support system for its causes among Democratic elected officials. These are the men and women who, unlike party officials, must face the public in general elections. Though some Democratic officeholders can win on a leftist record (sometimes by cloaking it with excellent constituent service), most of them are well aware of the fact that they can win reelection only if they are recognized as centrists. A great many of them genuinely hold centrist views. Even if they did not, they would understand that Democratic conventions dominated by extremists pose serious risks to their political futures. Thus, as the national Republican party was heading in the opposite direction, these Democratic officeholders, many of them mobilized by the DLC, were able, through their support of Governor Clinton, to help return the national Democratic party to a centrist position.

While giving serious attention to organizational work, the DLC, through its think-tank affiliate, the Progressive Policy Institute (PPI), has, through a series of thoughtful publications, made the case against the nostrums of the New Left which had been foisted on the national Democratic party since the 60's. It has steered a middle course between the leftist vision of a society thoroughly regulated in a multitude of aspects by a government committed to establishing "equity," and the rightist position that an unregulated economy will ultimately achieve the greatest good for the greatest number even if thousands of families may have to suffer privation in the meantime. (There is a parallel between this rightist willingness to sacrifice the present for the future and the Leninist idea of the approach to the Communist nirvana.)

Specifically, the DLC is committed to policies which encourage economic growth, with the government playing an affirmative role in assisting the private sector through encouragement of research and development in new technologies, rebuilding our infrastructure, and stimulating education and job training. It supports the expansion of free-trade agreements, subject to reasonable labor and environmental standards, with adequate provision for the retraining of displaced U.S. workers. It recognizes that "our public education system is fundamentally flawed" and that "more money alone won't fix it." Rejecting the voucher plan and its focus on private schools, the DLC urges concentration on improving the quality of our public-school systems. It insists on balancing rights with responsibilities. It urges that "social-welfare supports . . . be conditioned on the willingness of recipients to seek education, training, and work and to act responsibly," that a commitment to future community service be a condition for receiving federal college aid. The DLC notes the serious problem of inadequate law enforcement and urges that, as part of the plan of college aid, the federal government encourage the creation of an ROTC-style program for training policemen.

At the international level, the DLC calls for a defense commitment which would assure "that America will be prepared for a variety of . . . ambiguous but still potent threats to our security," and an activist foreign policy "to encourage those who are struggling to establish individual liberty, popular sovereignty, and equality be-

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fore the law." It emphasizes that "America cannot safely abdicate the responsibilities of global leadership."

I have gone to this length in describing the work and positions of the Democratic Leadership Council and the Progressive Policy Institute because our print and electronic media have not deemed any of this information to be "news." Though the Clinton nomination and the themes of his speeches are, of course, known, what is not known is that the Clinton candidacy and its policy themes were not haphazardly thrown together to support one man's personal ambition, but were the product of a systematic and deliberate effort by the DLC to reclaim the Democratic party for a set of centrist principles of government. Governor Clinton committed himself early on to these principles and based his run for the nomination on them.

An understanding of the role played by the DLC since its formation in 1985 is needed to enable us to answer the question of whether the national Democratic party has changed. There are, of course, differing forces at work in both our major parties. The issue at any one time is which of these forces is most likely to translate its program into action. The fact is that under the Clinton banner the DLC won the primaries. That victory was underscored by Governor Clinton's choice of Senator Al Gore as his running mate, for, rather than reaching into another wing of the Democratic party, Bill Clinton chose a fellow-member of the DLC. The Clinton representatives on the Democratic platform committee played a key role in writing DLC ideas into the platform. There is, therefore, good reason to assume that a Clinton administration will indeed be guided in significant part by the principles laid down in DLC position papers.

RICHARD SCHIFTER
Bethesda, Maryland

The L.A. Riots

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Congratulations on the three splendid articles in your July issue ["After Los Angeles": "How the Rioters Won" by Midge Decter; "The Legacy of the 60's" by Charles Murray"; and "Is White Racism the Problem?" by Arch Puddington]. I particularly appreciated Midge

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Decter's description of the tragicomic reactions of some of our pontificating media stars, self-immolating liberal intellectuals, and self-promoting politicians. No better example of the pervasive denial of reality (the billions poured into the bottomless maw of essentially black entitlement and affirmative-action programs; the refusal to acknowledge real progress made by working- and middle-class blacks, etc.) need be sought than Andrew Hacker's new book, *Two Nations*, so brilliantly dissected by Arch Puddington.

When I attended Columbia College (political light-years ago), I was privileged to attend a number of lectures by Mr. Hacker's father, Louis. Time may have fogged my recollection of his rather caustic social and economic commentary, but I recall that his remarks were always informed by a lively intelligence and sense of reality. It is this sense of the real world and the real people who inhabit it that seems to have failed the liberal elites (I wish there were a better term but none comes to mind) who have so indelibly marked the social, moral, and political agenda of the generation (my own) that came between Louis Hacker's lecture room and Andrew Hacker's new book.

When we of this generation worked or supported efforts to correct some of society's more egregious inequalities, did we really mean to suggest that "society" was responsible for all the greed and murder that may lurk in the human heart? Did we really foresee the consequences of our insistence on the removal of every social, moral, and legal restraint on what our own fathers would have called decent behavior, so that we and our children could do our "own thing" with impunity? After decades of social engineering and the most rigorous application of government intervention in human affairs in the former Soviet Union and throughout Eastern Europe (to say nothing of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy and Spain), culminating in the ignominious bankruptcy of these regimes, can anyone still honestly deny the ineluctable conclusion that every one of us, black or white, must bear major responsibility for his own condition; that such condition, to a marked degree, is inevitably the consequence of his own actions?

It is startling how the ideology of the age has labeled all the children innocent and all the parents guilty. The children (who, we are tirelessly reminded, did not ask to be born) have inherited a world of unspeakable injustices, inflicted by their parents who must bear the guilt of all the ages before them. (Apparently no one has suggested that the parents didn't ask to be born either, and inherited their own set of problems in an imperfect world!) Then at some point the child becomes a parent, loses his own parents, and, lo and behold, the mantle of guilt magically shifts to *his* shoulders for *his* children to see, thus freeing them to blame the consequences of their own feckless (or worse) behavior on "society."

And this same ideology insists on treating as innocent children all black and other disadvantaged groups (except for Jews and, apparently, Koreans or any group that overcomes its initial disadvantages by hard, personal endeavor). Your articles offer a telling refutation of this ideology, which should, at long last, be consigned to the ash-heap of history along with the other theories of social engineering that have now been discarded by peoples everywhere who have tasted the bitter fruits of their enforced imposition.

For, despite the howls of indignation that greeted the (admittedly politically inspired) comment that the legislation of the 60's was somehow responsible for the social disaffection of the 80's and 90's, there *is* a connection that must be objectively examined and discussed. And it is not enough that such legislation and the programs it engendered were inspired by good intentions. It is a commonplace that such intentions provide the paving stones for the road to hell. They may have led, as well, directly to South-Central Los Angeles.

HENRY SHERMAN
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I will respond to Midge Decter's article in one simple phrase: she doesn't have the foggiest idea of what she's talking about. As a young African-American male, I was at first interested in, then perturbed by, and then infuriated with the article. The only point I agreed with was her statement that ". . . taking charge of their [African-American] lives is the *only* thing that will save them." Many African-Americans have upheld that philosophy for years: El Hajj Malik El-Shabazz (Malcolm X), Martin Luther King, Jr., Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, Fannie Lou Hamer, and other courageous African-Americans have risked and often lost their lives so we could determine our own destiny—I sincerely hope that Miss Decter realizes this important fact.

As to her questioning the nation's commitment to the "black underclass," I'll say this: this society, for all its protestations of caring, has *completely ignored* the immense problems of poverty and homelessness. . . . Also, Miss Decter, the fact that you continue to hear about the urban ghetto and the fact that your government continues to throw pennies at the problem should tell you one incontrovertible fact: the problem has neither been solved nor even adequately addressed. . . .

Furthermore, Miss Decter, I strenuously object to your ignorant and racist comment cloaked as a question. You asked:

> How is it possible to go on declaring that what will save the young men of South-Central L.A., and the young girls they impregnate, and the illegitimate babies they *sire* is jobs? How is it possible for anyone to look at these *boys* of the underclass—to look at them literally, with one's own eyes, and actually *see* them—and imagine that they either want or could hold on to jobs? [Emphasis added.]

"Sire"?! How dare you insult us in that manner! That term is, according to Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary, "used especially of male domestic animals." WE ARE NOT, I REPEAT, NOT ANIMALS! How in hell can you make that kind of underhanded comparison? You probably don't even know any African-American men from South-Central L.A.! Do you think some tired, worn title as "Distinguished Fellow of the Institute on Religion and Public Life" makes you qualified to pontificate on African-Americans in the ghetto? Either you were joking—if you were, it certainly wasn't funny—or you really subscribe to the ever-present belief that black men are animalistic, which would make you even more ignorant than I perceive you to be. Oh, and lest I forget: take another look at the ghetto. You might find that selling drugs, no matter how morally reprehensible you or I might find it, is a job. How can you say that be-

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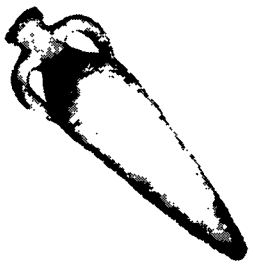

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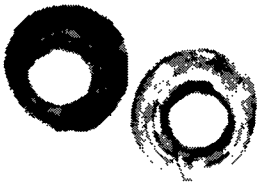

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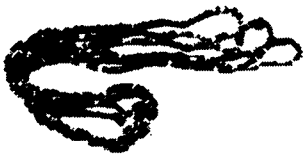

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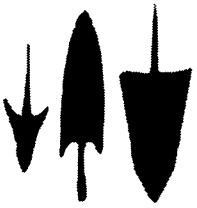

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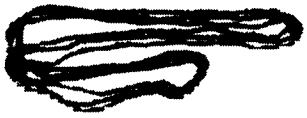

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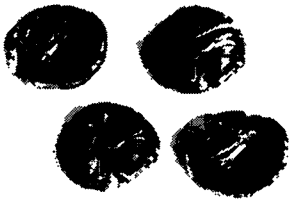

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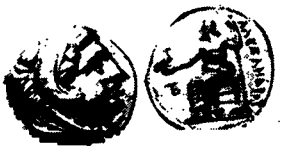

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cause of the way we look we neither want to nor have the capability to hold onto jobs? I suppose you believe our brains are smaller.

. . . Let's get back to your comments on African-American "boys"—by the way, *don't ever* refer to African-American men as "boys." In your treatment of a very volatile subject, you have completely failed to realize the psychology of the oppressed—for your further education in African-American nature I strongly suggest that you read Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* and Malcolm X's *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*. Of course, you also failed to recognize the root causes of the drug and gun problems in "the 'hood." I ask you: did any African-Americans manufacture and ship in first marijuana, then cocaine, and then crack? The answer is no. Did so-called "boys" manufacture, market, and then sell to the public increasingly deadly weapons? The answer? No. Of course it is our choice to sell drugs and murder one another; however, to put your own assumption against you, all this isn't new. This has happened for twenty years! For twenty years the urban ghetto has been ignored. Why? Because the problems didn't bother the suburbanites. It was only when whites became affected by AIDS, crack, and "violent" crime that they began paying attention to the underclass.

Don't sit there in your sanctimoniousness and pontificate on a subject you know *nothing* about. You may ignore me; I don't have your credentials or your status. I'm just an African-American man who, by the grace of God, beat the odds. But know this: there are over 30 million very unhappy African-Americans in this nation. We are tired of being compartmentalized, demonized, demoralized, vilified, murdered, fired, and ignored. We as a people are beginning to realize that the system doesn't work for us—only against us. The United States doesn't have long until the underclass—black and white—explodes.

ROGER A. SNEED
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Midge Decter's "How the Rioters Won" is a brilliant analysis of what I think we have come to see as a lost cause, an insoluble problem, a morass we will never pull ourselves out of: the nightmare of the inner city. . . . Reading her article, along with Charles Murray's "The Legacy of the 60's," it is easy to believe that the liberal mentality of the last 30 years has failed utterly.

Miss Decter concludes that after all else has failed we are now going to have to leave it to inner-city blacks to take responsibility for their own lives. She seems to be advocating a hands-off policy (i.e., let them sink or swim—there's nothing more we can do) and in general I would agree with this abysmally pessimistic conclusion. Except that there may be a few interesting straws in the wind.

For example: Maryland's Youth Service, a new compulsory program (a student cannot get a high-school diploma without doing community service) is a refreshing idea—and the really refreshing part is that it *is* compulsory. Here is a program which (1) might keep kids too busy to hang out and get into trouble and (2) might actually open their minds to aspects of life other than drugs, crime, gangs, and sitting in front of the TV all day. Sadly, the New York *Times* editorialized against the compulsory aspect of the program, using the same old tired "liberal" arguments. It's about time we admitted that most kids wouldn't volunteer to do community service, and that somebody's got to be the adult, the leader, the boss around here.

Perhaps the most thought-provoking message of the three articles in your July issue (and of most of the events taking place around the world today) is that people of different races, religions, and national origins just cannot live together. It seems to be written on the wall everywhere: South Africa and the U.S. (blacks and whites), the Middle East (Jews and Arabs), Yugoslavia (Serbs and Croats), Ireland (Protestants and Catholics)—and so on and on. I am not sure we can manage to disentangle ourselves from the present state of affairs, but maybe in the future governments and societies will think twice before experimenting with multinationalism or multiculturalism, or before importing foreign labor or allowing mass immigration. It's just become too bloody.

MARILYN MAGEN
Tel Aviv, Israel

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Kudos to Midge Decter for a thoughtful lead article on the riots in Los Angeles, but I write to disagree most vehemently with her on several points.

First, she is quite right that "diagnoses and prescriptions [regarding the problems of the black community] have . . . filled the American air." But she fails to say what those problems are. Basically, there are three: (1) the breakdown of the black family (she does allude to Daniel P. Moynihan's study of this phenomenon); (2) the lack of quality educational opportunities and consequent lack of personal networks and marketable skills; and (3) the persistence of class- and race-based prejudice.

Second, it is indeed *quite* possible to persist in refusing to "recognize" the "fact" that

> the condition of those young men is beyond the reach of government—that, indeed, the efforts of government have done much to undermine their capacity to take charge of their own lives.

I refuse to "recognize" this because I am a liberal, which to me means (to paraphrase Stanley Hoffmann) believing in the limited and reversible perfectibility of human beings. This is not blind faith. Decades of social-science research have demonstrated that economic success is most closely correlated with educational achievement. Miss Decter herself refers to the case of children in a Latino slum mastering calculus. So, it *can* be done, and it does *no* good to write the underclass off as unreformable and/or ineducable. . . .

What must be done: (1) the rapid and total (and expensive) overhaul of public education (not its replacement with "choice"), a reconfiguration designed to equip the students who pass through with the life skills necessary to participate as productive workers and active citizens; (2) the provision of a higher quality of justice in the inner city, designed to remove the immediate causes of the conflagrations in L.A. and, even more recently, in New York; and (3) the rebuilding of a multiracial/multiclass urban core in L.A. (yes, including funds for Korean entrepreneurs) as a model for future urban redevelopment. As a liberal, I advocate these changes not out of guilt or because I am some kind of self-appointed guardian of the black and/or poor, but because I love this country and am alarmed at what I see as the fraying of the social fabric, the vanishing of tolerance.

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Having said all that, let me hasten to add that no single program or initiative is going to rid our society of the black underclass or even (the more numerous) poor whites, for that matter. The fact is (and this is something both liberals and conservatives do not discuss) that even modern democratic-welfarist capitalism, for all the wealth it unquestionably produces and redistributes, produces a class-stratified society, including a hate-filled unskilled underclass composed of blacks, whites, Hispanics, Orientals, and Amerindians. In addition to the weak family units, unequal educational opportunities, and prejudice mentioned above, people often become or remain poor because they make bad choices, and the labor markets hold them ruthlessly to account.

I would also like to take issue with Charles Murray's article, "The Legacy of the 60's." Mr. Murray's attempt to demonstrate that the conditions which produced the riots in Los Angeles derive from the Great Society programs of a quarter century ago is indeed persuasive, which is precisely why several objections must be made.

First, the work ethic among inner-city youths is not as absent as Mr. Murray appears to believe. My own personal observations in Washington, Baltimore, New York, and Philadelphia reveal substantial numbers of youths (mainly black and Hispanic) quite willing to work at low-paying jobs in construction, restaurants, and the courier business. If the work ethic is not dead, as Mr. Murray supposes it to be, it substantially undermines his arguments about the pernicious nature of the interactions between individual choice and liberal social-welfare policy.

Second, after twelve years of Republican rule, how can Mr. Murray deny Republican responsibility for "current social policy"? It seems to me that, if only by default, the Republicans must share the blame for the social conditions that produced riots in L.A. (and New York). Let us remember that in addition to controlling the White House, . . . the Republicans now also control the federal judiciary, including the Supreme Court, and also maintain a substantial minority in both houses of Congress. So what's their excuse?

Third and lastly, . . . the central "problem" with managing mass social behaviors in the United States today is the fact that we have a free society. Freedom often means that people will make bad choices: get pregnant too young and remain unmarried, drop out of school, abuse alcohol and drugs, smoke too many cigarettes, ride motorcycles without wearing helmets, and so on. The point is that these choices may well have the consequence of contributing to poverty, but the most obvious remedy—restricting choices by legal fiat—is unavailable to policy-makers unless one is willing to reduce freedom drastically. The only alternative is a revival and expansion (*à la* John Dewey) of the mission of the system of public education in our society. This will give persons born into poverty more resistance to the structural causes of poverty (insufficient nutrition, weak education, racial and class prejudice, lack of access to key socioeconomic networks) in addition to helping them avoid the disastrous individual choices that also contribute to poverty. . . .

BLAIR EWING
United States Institute
of Peace
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Midge Decter is right, of course, in pointing to the morally debilitating effects of the social-science mindset. Li'l Monster, the gang member who insists to Ted Koppel that his criminality is an inescapable family legacy, has imbibed deeply, if indirectly, of Sociology 101. But the problem is not simply "liberal" social science. It is social science as such and all the social commentary that it inspires.

However much we may applaud the work of someone like Charles Murray, it shares with all social science a concern with general, or "root," causes. He writes of "feedback loops," "the web of status rewards and penalties," "trend-lines," "social signals," and, most tellingly, of the "conditions in South-Central Los Angeles . . . that produced the riot." He might disagree powerfully with the likes of an Andrew Hacker or a Frances Fox Piven, but he shares their vocabulary—a vocabulary that undermines the very moral responsibility that he hopes to encourage. A young hoodlum who thinks of himself as an epiphenomenon of some broader social trend is inevitably less inclined to see his problems as the result of his own conduct. It makes little practical difference whether Li'l Monster lays the blame for his own behavior on a white conspiracy or on the Great Society gone awry.

Charles Murray provides a damning critique of past social policy, and it should serve as a call to arms. But we must recognize that the language of "root causes" is not the language of moral praise and blame.

GARY ROSEN
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Thirty years ago I used to write articles for COMMENTARY with many of the themes of Charles Murray's "The Legacy of the 60's." Given his great talent, I am glad to have preceded and not to have followed him. But I must say I regret his displeasure at my characterization of Attorney General Barr's assertion that ". . . what we are seeing in the inner-city is essentially the grim harvest of the Great Society." I stated on the floor of the Senate that this was ". . . one of the most depraved statements I have ever heard from an American official."

I was present at the creation of the Great Society, in particular the group headed by R. Sargent Shriver which drew up the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964. I went with him, along with Adam Yarmolinsky, to the cabinet meeting on December 3, 1963 at which the proposal was presented to President Johnson. I sat next to Shriver, again with Yarmolinsky, at the opening hearing of Adam Clayton Powell's Committee on Labor and Education. During this period I think it fair to say that our principal focus was on employment. However, at this very time the Office of Policy Planning in the Department of Labor, which I headed as Assistant Secretary for Policy Planning and Research, began to come up with indications that employment and suchlike economic indicators were no longer associated, as they had been, with indices of social-welfare dependency. Unemployment rates began to go down; simultaneously welfare rates had begun to go up. These series, as statisticians say, had been closely positively correlated. Of a sudden, they crossed over and became negatively correlated. James Q. Wilson has called this "Moynihan's scissors." It happened over a whole range of variables. Other researchers have since found similar breakouts in the mid-1960's. Thus, Lester Adelson on violence in the Summer 1980 issue of *Pharos*:

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When I started to work in this governmental agency [the Coroner's Office of Cuyahoga County, Ohio—Cleveland and its suburbs], the annual county homicide toll was less than 100, of which 50 to 60 percent involved guns. Starting in the mid-60's, the homicide incidence and rate rose sharply. Now nearly 80 percent of these bloody episodes are gun-dependent.

My question then is as follows: how can the Great Society have been responsible for social changes that had clearly commenced *before* the Great Society legislation was enacted, or which at the very least started at about the same time and well before legislation could have had much influence? I like to think that if we were talking about climate change, or some other natural phenomenon, there would by now be a large and possibly dispositive literature on the subject. There is not. But no matter. I wish Charles Murray or others of equal talent and committed energy would address this subject, as we really do need to know. And I continue to wish that the Attorney General would confine his public commentary to subjects on which he is clearly more informed, as for example the constitutionality of kidnapping.

[Senator] DANIEL P. MOYNIHAN
Washington, D.C.

MIDGE DECTER writes:

Roger A. Sneed accuses me of suggesting that young black men are animals because I used the word "sire." He should get himself a better dictionary. The rest of his screed is a bit hard to understand: he warns me not to refer to African-American men as "boys" (in the offending passage I was, as it happens, actually referring to boys) and then exculpates these lawless black "men" by implying that it is others—drug importers and weapons manufacturers—who are responsible for the way they live. I don't think that is a definition of manliness to which Martin Luther King, Jr. or even Malcolm X would have subscribed. And finally, I believe myself qualified to discuss blacks precisely because I do not regard them, morally speaking, to be in any sense different from me.

Because Marilyn Magen is pleasant, I wish I could agree with at least one thing she says. Alas. I am not so despairing as she says I am, and indeed, not so despairing as she evidently is about the possibility of ethnic pluralism—anyway, in Western democracies, and most particularly in the United States of America. Now, to hold someone responsible for his own behavior can, I suppose, be characterized as "sink or swim"; I myself would call it a basic form of human respect. Nor can I share Miss Magen's enthusiasm for the new Maryland youth-service program. Not that there is anything to object to in this program in and of itself, but like the Montessori method in education and *Sesame Street*, it is almost certain to become the exclusive province of the aspiring educated middle class forever on the prowl to enrich the experience of its children. How would one, in simple logic, imagine that young people who refuse to work for money will accept the discipline of working for no pay at all?

As for Blair Ewing, kind-hearted as he is, I am afraid that members of the black underclass will find no help from his quarter. "The lack of quality educational opportunities and the persistence of class- and race-based prejudice" are the very sorts of explanations that encourage many too many young blacks to continue hanging out in the slough of despond. They know better than anybody that these explanations are not the true ones, and being alibied in this way only increases the kind of self-loathing so vividly expressed during those terrible days in Los Angeles.

And to Henry Sherman, thank you, and I could not agree more about Arch Puddington's brilliance, in this instance as in so many others.

CHARLES MURRAY writes:

Senator Daniel P. Moynihan asks how the Great Society can have been responsible for social changes that began before the Great Society legislation had passed. A quick clarifying point is that I have never thought that the Great Society legislation was a special villain. Social policy was transformed during a reform period that lasted from the early 1960's to the early 1970's. Legislation in general, and the Great Society legislation in particular, were only part of the story and in many ways a minor part.

This decade-long reform period is responsible for subsequent social change in the same way that someone who puts gasoline on a smoldering fire is responsible—not for starting it, but for making it into a problem. Or, in the Senator's terms, not for changing the signs of the correlations ("Moynihan's scissors") but for ballooning the slopes of the trend-lines. To take Senator Moynihan's first example: the nation could have lived with the fact that welfare recipiency began going up in the early 1960's even though unemployment went down, if the size of the increase had remained where it was—from 2 percent of American families on welfare in 1961 to 2.3 percent in 1966. But it didn't. From 1966 to 1970, the proportion of American families on welfare went from 2.3 percent to 5 percent—a gigantic increase that cannot be passed off as just a natural follow-on to the shift in the sign of the correlation back in the early 1960's.

Having said that, I also think the Senator has a point. The question about origins is important, and no one has tackled it head-on. Let me describe my own working hypothesis—no more than that, but consistent with the data as far as I can tell.

Begin by envisioning policy practice in criminal justice, education, and welfare as moving on the continuum I described in my article, anchored on one end by the principles of the old elite wisdom—personal accountability, swift and certain sanctions for misbehavior, rewards contingent on right behavior—and anchored on the other by the new elite wisdom—the system is to blame, suspension of moral judgment, therapy rather than sanctions. Then delineate the points at which policy practice began to shift, how fast, and in what ways. I suggest that the origins of the puzzling pre-Great-Society shifts in social trends consistently followed shifts in policy practice.

Take Senator Moynihan's second example, crime. For many years prior to the 1960's the elite wisdom had been shifting to a consensus that punishment was pointless, the purpose of prison was to rehabilitate, and often the best thing to do was to leave the offender on the street. It took a long time for this shift to affect practice, but it finally did. One example of many: in 1960, the number of prisoners—not just the number per 1,000 arrests, but the raw number of prisoners—began to drop. The proportion had been

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dropping even earlier, and now began to plunge. Clearance rates for robbery and burglary had been dropping since the mid-1950's. Superimpose the trend-lines on the indicators of practice over the trend-lines for the indicators of crime, and the fit is pretty good, with lag times that make sense.

One need not be simple-minded about causation. Many other things were going on with regard to crime during the 1960's. Many things were going on in the culture. The baby boomers were reaching their teens. The world is complicated. But it is also true that the shift toward a less certain, swift, and simple criminal-justice system that reached full flower in the 1960's began in the 1950's. The origins of social change antedated the Great Society, but so did the pertinent changes in practice.

Perhaps the most interesting example of origins involves illegitimacy. The rate of increase in illegitimacy steepened dramatically during the 1960's, but a shallow increase can be traced back to the 1930's. As Senator Moynihan probably knows, Frances Perkins, the first woman cabinet member, would have had no trouble at all giving him an explanation. She had been horrified when the Children's Bureau decided that never-married women were eligible for the new Aid to Families with Dependent Children program, and blamed that decision for disastrous effects on illegitimacy among blacks. The signs of certain correlations might well have changed in the mid-1930's, certainly exonerating the Great Society of starting the trend—but not contradicting my general explanation of why so many social indicators have gone so bad.

To Gary Rosen, I offer the above as an example of when the language of moral praise and blame must be put aside in favor of more bloodless language if people of good faith but different views are to talk to each other. This does not mean I think morality is inappropriate when thinking about these issues.

Regarding Blair Ewing's three criticisms, seriatim:

1. I would be astonished if his personal observations did *not* reveal that substantial numbers of youths are willing to work at low-paying jobs. About 30 percent of black males ages 16-24, not in school, with just a high-school education, are not in the labor force.

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Those "West Bank" Settlements

Are they *really* the "greatest obstacle to peace"?

Not too long ago, then Secretary of State James Baker made the astonishing comment that Israeli settlements in Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") were the greatest obstacle to peace in the Middle East. *This claim is constantly being repeated; many have come to accept it as truth.* Could Mr. Baker possibly be right? It's a serious accusation and it deserves examination.

What are the facts?

A recap of history. Some thumbnail history may be in order. Large numbers of Jews have been living in these territories since biblical times. Most of the Arabs living there are in fact relative newcomers. "Palestine" is the entire area now covered by Israel, including Judea/Samaria (the so-called "West Bank") *and* what is now the Kingdom of Jordan. It originally also included the Golan Heights, which later, in an agreement between England and France, were ceded to France, and to Syria as the successor in possession. In 1922, contrary to the Mandate of the League of Nations, the British severed the entire area east of the Jordan and gave it to the Hashemite Arabs for their assistance in World War I. Thus, fully 75% of Palestine, all of which under the Mandate and under the terms of the Balfour Declaration was meant to be a homeland for the Jewish people, was lost for that purpose. Only the area west of the Jordan was left for Jewish settlement.

"Why should the Arab countries and the 'West Bank' be the only places in the world where Jews are not allowed to live?"

How the West Bank became "Arab country". In 1947, after decades of strife between Arabs and Jews, the British decided to relinquish the Mandate. The UN stepped in and proposed a partition plan under which the country (west of the River) was to be divided into respective Arab and Jewish areas. Jerusalem was to be internationalized. The Jews accepted the plan; the Arabs refused it out of hand. In 1948, on the twice truncated territory allotted to them by the U.N., the Jews declared their independence, and the state of Israel was born. On the same day, six Arab armies invaded the new-born state. In what can be described as an almost biblical miracle, the Jews defeated them. When an armistice was finally secured, however, TransJordan remained in possession of Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") and the eastern part of Jerusalem; Egypt remained in possession of the Gaza Strip. TransJordan then renamed itself Jordan.

The Six-Day War. Once in possession of the "West Bank" and East Jerusalem, the Jordanians promptly proceeded to expel all Jews and systematically to desecrate and to destroy most Jewish sacred places, cemeteries and houses of worship. No Jews, regardless of citizenship were allowed into the "West Bank" or East Jerusalem, the locale of the Western Wall, the holiest site in Judaism. In 1967, Egyptian president Abdel Nasser joined by the same array of Arab armies that had unsuccessfully tried to destroy Israel at its birth in 1948, launched another war against Israel "to drive the Jews into the sea" and into oblivion, once and for all. But the Israelis utterly defeated the combined Arab might in the 6-Day War, one of the greatest military victories in history. When the dust of war settled, the Israelis had not only retained their national territory, but had repossessed the territories of Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank"), the eastern part of Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights and had occupied the vast Sinai Peninsula.

It is clear from this abbreviated history that the Israeli claim to the "West Bank" is far stronger than that of the Arabs. About 100,000 Jews now live there. And why shouldn't they? Why should the Arab countries and the "West Bank" be the only places in the whole wide world where Jews are not allowed to live? How can 100,000 Jews living among 700,000 Arabs be the "greatest threat to peace"? How can our government be concerned about a new settlement of a few mobile homes on some barren Judean hills as the "greatest threat to peace", when we seem to be oblivious and totally unconcerned about the unrelenting hostility of the Arab countries, the de facto incorporation of Lebanon by Syria, the Scuds and chemical weapons still remaining in Iraq, and the relentless and ominous build-up of Syria's missile forces?

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This is a minority of such youths. It is also an astonishingly high figure.

2. Republicans are indeed responsible for failing to do more to change social policy during the twelve years in which they have had their opportunity. Mr. Ewing seems to have missed my point, which was that today's social policy is remarkably unchanged from the one that was generated during the 1960's.

3. The "most obvious remedy" for a situation in which too many young people make terrible choices is neither to restrict those choices by legal fiat nor to revivify public education, but to end policies that encourage those terrible choices.

The Kennedy Assassination

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Bravo for Jacob Cohen's article, "Yes, Oswald Alone Killed Kennedy" [June]. It is concise, clear, and right on the mark. It should set the record straight, but unfortunately those who believe there was a conspiracy to kill John F. Kennedy, and a government conspiracy at that, will never be silenced. . . .

My own feeling is that it is quite possible that Oswald did not act alone, but I certainly believe that government officials were not part of the conspiracy either to kill Kennedy or to influence the investigation. A lone accomplice could have remained silent all these years and might now be dead, his secret buried with him. However, it is just not conceivable that our government could have been involved and that no evidence would be forthcoming over this entire 30-year period . . . no death-bed confessions, no anonymous letters, etc., etc. . . .

No one is disputing Oliver Stone's right to make a movie about the subject. However, if he were not intellectually dishonest, he would have changed the names and made the movie as fiction and let the public decide if it was relevant to the Kennedy assassination. . . . Instead, he presented it as a documentary, thereby eliciting severe criticism. . . . The fact that many of the "right people"—such as Tom Wicker and Anthony Lewis—labeled the movie bad fiction must really bother Stone. . . . On the other hand, . . . Studs Terkel was quoted as saying in effect that he doesn't understand the criticism of the movie, since, after all, everyone knows our government acts in this manner. Unfortunately, there is a segment of the American public that agrees with Terkel. . . .

In any case, the damage to our young people, as Mr. Cohen concludes, is incalculable. . . . It is one thing to be critical of government actions as the facts warrant but quite another to lead our young people to believe that a conspiracy existed when there are no facts. . . .

PHILIP J. SCHILLER
Chicago, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I have never understood the fascination of the American public with the Kennedy assassination conspiracy theories. The movie *JFK*, which evidently incorporates all the various conspiracy theories, purports to be history, but is instead a distortion, a dark fairy tale. A district attorney who prosecutes a person for a criminal offense without any credible evidence would ordinarily be considered a villain. . . . Yet Oliver Stone makes Jim Garrison a hero. The movie is an abomination, yet I am certain that Jacob Cohen's careful analysis of the facts will not change the situation. However, it is still worthwhile to reexamine the record.

A former conspiracist, Jim Moore, in his book *Conspiracy of One*, presents a time analysis of the Zapruder film which makes sense and is based on evidence that is in the record. The first shot missed. Moore believes this shot was fired at Z-186. The movements of President Kennedy and Governor Connally at Z-228 and Z-230 were in reaction to this shot and not to the shot that hit them. The second shot, fired at Z-235, three seconds after the first shot, was the bullet that hit both the President and the Governor. The third and final shot is obvious at Z-312 and Z-313, over four seconds after the second shot.

Something that never seems to get mentioned is that the Attorney General of the United States on November 22, 1963, was Robert Kennedy. Enough said. Hurrah for Jacob Cohen.

HOWARD R. HARRIS
San Diego, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Jacob Cohen's defense of the conclusions of the Warren Commission is the best that I have encountered. . . .

One qualification: the Warren Commission may have been unduly influenced by the testimony of the Connallys. . . . May it not be that the first shot (recovered bullet) penetrated the President's neck and Connally's body, but did not cause Connally's wrist wound? Shot two could then have struck Connally's wrist as he collapsed, and ricocheted, the core of it striking the curbing near where James T. Tague stood.

I have long believed that the above revision would strengthen the Warren Commission's principal conclusion, i.e., that Oswald inflicted all of the President's wounds.

Ultimately, my lesson from the controversy is fully as terrifying as any that Oliver Stone would have me learn. It has now been proven that, even without credible evidence, a few tendentious persons, their outcries amplified by the media, can discredit the work of government officials and leaders.

IVAN W. PARKINS
Mount Pleasant, Michigan

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Jacob Cohen writes: "[I]f the idea . . . was to frame Oswald for having fired three shots, why fire six? Did the Conspiracy expect that no one would notice?" Mr. Cohen might also have added that if the idea was to frame Oswald by firing from behind the motorcade, why would the Conspiracy place its marksmen on the knoll in front of the motorcade? Necessarily, the Conspiracy would have had to instruct the assassins to shoot Kennedy from the front, but in such a way as to make it appear that the shots came from behind. . . .

JERRY SPINDEL
Newton, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I thoroughly enjoyed Jacob Cohen's spirited defense of the Warren Commission's findings, and would like to add something for the benefit of conspiracy-minded people who might object to his casual dismissal of Jean Hill, who has made a career of claiming she saw a gunman running from the grassy knoll.

Less than an hour after the assassination, Jean Hill was interviewed by a reporter from WBAP-TV, the NBC affiliate in Dallas, and her unedited interview was broadcast to the entire country. In it,

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she did claim that she thought she saw a man running from the scene, but never mentioned seeing a gun of any kind.

However, she also claimed that from her vantage point of less than twenty feet from the presidential limousine, she could see a nonexistent fuzzy dog between the President and Mrs. Kennedy. Later, before the Warren Commission, Mrs. Hill admitted that she had been held up to a great deal of ridicule by her friends for having declared on national television that she had seen a dog in the presidential limousine that never was.

Warren Commission critics who constantly point to Mrs. Hill as "proof" of a grassy-knoll gunman (as Oliver Stone does) always leave out this element of her story because it creates a problem for them. If Jean Hill could not accurately remember the details of what was in the presidential limousine just twenty feet away, then her recollection of what she thought she saw from more than 100 feet away becomes highly suspect, and would surely never have stood up in any court of law.

Mr. Cohen is to be commended for providing a glimmer of sanity amid the endless barrage of mindless garbage generated by Oliver Stone's movie. . . .

ERIC J. PADDON
Devon, Pennsylvania

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Jacob Cohen's "Yes, Oswald Alone Killed Kennedy" contains one small error: he conflates the names of S.M. Holland (a witness to the assassination who said he heard four shots) and A.J. Millican (who said he heard eight, a record) and gives Holland's initials as A.J.

Other than that, the article is an excellent introduction to the case. I would like to expand on one point, namely, the way the Warren Commission's critics deal with the earwitness testimony. Essentially, they (1) ignore the broad consensus among the witnesses that there were exactly three shots; (2) ignore the virtual unanimity among the witnesses that the shots all seemed to come from one location; (3) tendentiously count the witnesses who by some stretch of the imagination might be said to have identified some place in the general area of the knoll as the source of the shots . . . ; (4) use this testimony as a springboard to postulate four, five, six, or seven shots from two, three, or four different locations . . . ; and then (5) piously accuse the Commission of a cover-up for allegedly ignoring these witnesses' testimony.

Unfortunately these machinations have served to obscure the fact that the main dispute among witnesses was whether there were three shots, all from the Book Depository, or three, all from the knoll. In *Rush to Judgment*, Mark Lane scored this issue 58-32 in favor of the knoll; Mr. Cohen mentions a report done for the House Committee (before its last-minute conversion to the belief that there was a conspiracy), which scores it 49-21 in favor of the Depository. Lane's count is clearly biased, taking advantage of the very vague descriptions so many witnesses gave. But is the count Mr. Cohen cites, which is based largely on the same body of testimony, much better? I do not think so; I cannot find 49 witnesses who indicated the Depository, much as I would like to. But the exact number makes little difference; there was plainly some kind of distorting effect at work, and the rest of the evidence overwhelmingly supports the Commission's version. . . .

Still, the great thing about having a conspiracy theory is that you can always explain away any contrary testimony by assuming it to be a lie and any contrary evidence by assuming it to be faked. After all, if critics can claim that dozens of frames on the Zapruder film were somehow seamlessly retouched to remove a gaping wound and to put in another one somewhere else, then there is nothing that cannot be similarly explained. . . .

AVINOAM FREEDMAN
Teaneck, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Excepting only the Lincoln assassination and the attempt on Truman, all American would-be assassins have been "lone nuts." And, where the assassin succeeded, the resulting outpourings of national outrage and grief have inspired precursors to Jack Ruby. Charles Guiteau, Garfield's assassin, was shot at in his cell by a guard who was later acquitted on grounds of insanity. John Wilkes Booth was killed by a mentally unbalanced soldier who some years before had castrated himself out of religious mania.

Presidential deaths have also inspired millions of credulous and

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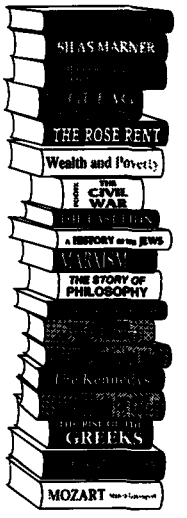

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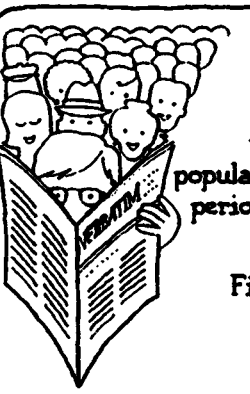

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suggestible people to swallow labyrinthine conspiracy theories concocted by con men and/or fanatics. Warren Harding died of food poisoning, but a book by Gaston Means, a corrupt former FBI agent fired for his participation in Harding-era scandals, convinced many that he had actually been murdered by his wife out of anger over his affairs or for some other motive. . . .

The tumult, confusion, mismanagement, and subsequent charges of ineptitude that inevitably accompany a sudden, totally unexpected national calamity provide dark questions for the delectation of conspiracy nuts. (What about the *other man* on the train platform where Garfield was shot? . . . Why did the police allow him to slip away unidentified and unquestioned?)

Lincoln's assassination did involve a conspiracy: during the war, Booth's gang had been encouraged by Confederate intelligence agents . . . in a harebrained scheme to kidnap Lincoln in order to bring about a general release of Confederate prisoners. The surrender having prevented this, Booth . . . struck in revenge, self-consciously imitating the classical tyrannicides. But conspiracy nuts of various persuasions had other explanations. One is the familiar nefarious-Jewish-bankers scenario: led by the Rothschilds, the international Jewish bankers killed Lincoln, an economic protectionist, to facilitate their taking over the American economy. Another theory . . . was that the Catholic Church, which supposedly had supported secession in order to weaken the U.S., was behind the murder. . . . Moreover, *à la JFK*, it was "proved" that Catholic priests a thousand miles away knew of the assassination before it had even occurred. . . .

Mr. Cohen's analysis and debunking of the JFK conspiracy nonsense are truly masterful. But he did not have space for the following, which are among our favorite points:

• *Why did Oswald wait until the limousine was going away rather than shoot as it was approaching him?* Pointing a rifle out a window at scores of *oncoming* Secret Service agents and police minimizes an assassin's chance of living long enough to get shots off, much less escaping unscathed. Oswald was a nut, not a moron. Moreover, the approach shot, which would have involved leading and tracking the target ever downward as the limousine approached, was inferior to the going-away shot which was virtually straight-on, giving Oswald what was, in effect, a stationary shot.

• *Direction of the shots.* Stone thinks other assassins fired from *in front* of JFK's limousine, whereas the Book Depository from which Oswald fired is in *back*. Had there been a conspiracy to blame the shooting on Oswald, the assassins would all have been positioned to shoot from the back. Having them shoot from the front necessarily would have revealed that it was a conspiracy if any of the assassins had hit JFK or the limo or its other occupants. . . .

• *Non-qualification of conspiracy cult writers.* The various conspiracy writers include not a single person technically qualified as a coroner, pathologist, criminologist, or historian. From the biographical blurbs on the books, their qualifications are: *High Treason*—Robert J. Groden wrote a previous JFK conspiracy cult book and Harrison E. Livingstone graduated from Harvard, attended an unnamed law school (from which he apparently did not graduate), and writes fiction (unspecified); *Best Evidence*—David Lifton is a graduate of an engineering school; *Mafia Kingfish*—John H. Davis has written gossip books about the Kennedys and Bouviers; *Rush to Judgment*—the egregious Mark Lane is a self-promoting leftist lawyer and defender of America's foremost anti-Semitic activist group, the Liberty Lobby (which, along with the John Birch Society, attributes the assassination to the "Jew-ridden" CIA, Trilateral Commission, and similar *bêtes noires* of the lunatic fringe Right); *Contract on America*—the only nonfiction work we recall that has *no* biographical information about its author. Last but not least comes Colonel Prouty, Oliver Stone's "technical adviser" on the film. Prouty's book is published by the Liberty Lobby, on whose advisory board he sits along with the former Grand Dragon of the Mississippi Ku Klux Klan.

Compare the "qualifications" of these conspiracy cultists to those who reject the lunacy: Professors Cohen and Lattimer; Nobel Prize-winning scientist Luis Alvarez; Colonel Martin Fackler, M.D., an experienced battle surgeon and co-author of the NATO medical manual, who until his retirement headed the Army's Experimental Ballistics Laboratory.

• *Kennedy's politics*: . . . Kennedy was an ardent cold-war liberal—with the emphasis on cold war. His world view was shaped by the failure of appeasement in the years leading up to World War II: "The 1930's taught us a clear lesson: aggressive conduct, if allowed to go unchecked, ultimately leads to war" (October 22, 1962). . . .

Stone projects his own violently inconsistent beliefs on Kennedy to create the myth that Kennedy was murdered to prevent his abandoning operations against Cuba and Vietnam. In the Eisenhower years, Kennedy had been a vociferous partisan of the domino theory. . . . He was deeply concerned not to be blamed for the loss of Southeast Asia, which, according to the domino theory, he believed would be lost unless he opposed Communist insurgency there.

Likewise, far from being a "victim" of rogue CIA policies against Castro, he and his brother were the architects of those policies. Kennedy's only problem with the CIA was that it had botched the Bay of Pigs invasion and was too slow in carrying out *his* and Bobby's assassination and sabotage plots against Castro.

In the speech he was intending to give on the day of his death, Kennedy again expressly rejected withdrawal from Vietnam as he had repeatedly done in public pronouncements in the preceding months. Or consider the speech he gave the day after the collapse of the Bay of Pigs invasion. It began by expressly reserving our right to invade Cuba and overthrow Castro whenever he menaced U.S. security. Kennedy cautioned Moscow that "should that time ever come, we do not intend to be lectured on intervention by those whose character was stamped for all time on the bloody streets of Budapest." . . .

DON B. KATES, JR.
VALERIE J. KLEIN
Novato, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In "Yes, Oswald Alone Killed Kennedy," Jacob Cohen aptly demolishes the conspiracy theories regarding the Kennedy assassination. The only question remaining concerns the motivation of the conspiracists. Mr. Cohen offers one explanation when he notes the mindset of the "liberated" who

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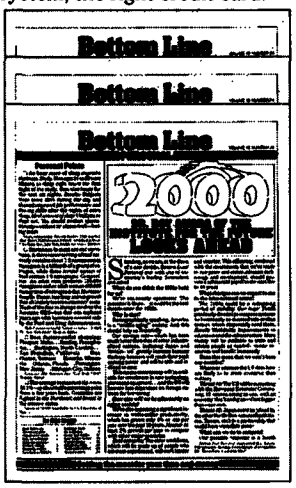

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"hold the view that to *question* any official version of anything is important in and of itself, even if the questions are based on palpable falsehoods."

I would like to suggest one other explanation—at least with regard to Oliver Stone. I have seen Stone in several televised interviews and noticed that whenever he enumerates his theories . . . , he invariably interjects a statement which in large measure tells us what prompts him. He matter-of-factly states that if Kennedy had not been killed, there would have been no Vietnam, and suggests that the assassination was a conspiracy of elements eager for that war who knew Kennedy was about to withdraw. He makes this statement without elaboration as if it were a given . . . , but offers no evidence for it. . . .

Indeed, what evidence there is suggests the opposite of what Stone would have us believe, namely, that Kennedy was on his way deeper into Vietnam, not on his way out. The Kennedy administration encouraged the coup which overthrew the Diem regime in South Vietnam in the fall of 1963, thereby making South Vietnam more dependent—almost totally dependent—on the United States, and shortly before he died Kennedy sent more American troops to Indochina. Further, Kennedy's top foreign-policy advisers were, to a man, the same people who advised Johnson.

Stone . . . is not merely another example of that reflexive adversarialism which has characterized so much of the American intelligentsia since the 1960's. Stone, I submit, is looking for an explanation of Vietnam, seeking to place blame for the tragedy in Indochina. If Stone wants to place blame for Vietnam, he should place it . . . where the evidence indicates the blame belongs—with the Presidents themselves and their advisers and, in the cases of Kennedy and Johnson, with the . . . Ivy League academics who advised *both* Presidents. To blame Vietnam on the machinations of "the military-industrial complex" with the Kennedy assassination as the linchpin constitutes a fabrication of colossal proportions. . . .

JAMES E. SALYERS
Ashmore, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Public-opinion polls show that about half the population now believes that Kennedy was murdered by a conspiracy of government officials. That opinion is spreading steadily, especially as the younger generation becomes familiar with recent research. The percentage of the population that shares Jacob Cohen's opinion that a lone assassin was responsible is dwindling to an irreducible hard core of about 10-15 percent. Mr. Cohen has now reasserted his own fundamentalist opinion and claims that his "serious study" should cause "the mountain of conspiracy literature" to "collapse."

I do not expect COMMENTARY to provide equal space to refute all of Mr. Cohen's arguments, but allow me the space at least to address his first argument as a typical example. He calls this the "issue of timing." . . . In the literature about the assassination, the timing issue is normally understood as follows:

It seems that Kennedy was hit the first time somewhere in the interval of Zapruder frames 210-224, while the limousine was behind the highway sign. As Kennedy emerges from behind the sign, he is clutching his neck and has obviously been hit. It does not seem that Connally was hit by that first bullet, because of his position and unpained expression. He is not obviously hit until about Z-234-238. The timing issue is that the interval between Z-210 and Z-238 is only about 1.5 seconds (the film speed was about 18 frames per second), which was less than the rifle's minimum refiring time.

The Warren Commission resolved the timing issue by concluding that a single bullet hit both Kennedy and Connally during the Z-210-238 interval and that Connally simply did not react immediately when this bullet hit him.

For many reasons, the critics dispute this single-bullet explanation. Without going into the entire controversy, their point in regard to the *timing* is that if Connally was hit by a separate bullet, then three bullets struck during the 5.6 seconds between Z-210 and Z-312, when the final bullet seems to hit Kennedy's head.

Mr. Cohen can honestly argue for his single-bullet theory, but I say he misrepresents the critics' argument in the timing issue. The critics do not say that Oswald could not have fired the gun twice or even three times during 5.6 seconds—of course he could have. What they say is that (1) separate bullets hit Kennedy and Connally during Z-210-238; (2) two bullets could not have been fired from the rifle during that short interval; and (3) therefore, three bullets were not fired from that one rifle during the 5.6-second interval of Z-210-312. (This issue is presented clearly in complete detail by Josiah Thompson in his classic book, *Six Seconds in Dallas: A Micro-Study of the Kennedy Assassination*, 1967.)

The main point is that it is simply not true that Mr. Cohen's arguments are going to "collapse" the conspiracy literature. Anyone who understands this controversy well can clearly see that Mr. Cohen is missing this particular point widely and will only influence the uninformed. . . .

MIKE SYLWESTER
Ft. Belvoir, Virginia

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Jacob Cohen's absolute certainty that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone to kill John F. Kennedy is not shared by those who are willing to consider evidence that Mr. Cohen overlooks.

For example, Mr. Cohen reports in great detail how post-mortem X-rays of Kennedy's head supposedly match previous X-rays of Kennedy, and claims that the post-mortem X-rays prove without a doubt that the fatal shot came from behind "unless the photos and X-rays are faked." One of those X-rays clearly shows that the orbital bone around Kennedy's right eye is disintegrated to such an extent that his eye would have been missing. Yet the autopsy photos of Kennedy's face show absolutely no evidence of what would have been a horribly disfiguring injury. This disparity indicates that either the X-rays or the photos were not of Kennedy.

Mr. Cohen discounts the length of the shadows in the backyard photos of Oswald bearing a rifle and copies of *The Militant* and *The Worker*. He does not mention that the size of Oswald's head remains the same in each of the three pictures, while the length of his body mysteriously changes. This type of disparity is consistent with doctored photos. In addition, the photos show a man with a broad, square chin; Oswald's chin was notable for its narrowness.

The rifle found on the sixth floor of the Book Depository was identified as a German Mauser by deputy sheriff and former gunshop owner Seymour Weitzman.

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Roger Craig, another deputy sheriff, later confirmed seeing the rifle at the time it was found, as well as an inscription on it that identified it as a Mauser. In contrast, Mannlicher-Carcano rifles are inscribed with "Made in Italy." No Mannlicher-Carcano was found during the search of the Book Depository, yet it appeared later at the Dallas police headquarters, and was identified as the murder weapon.

Of the six witnesses Mr. Cohen refers to who said they saw someone on the sixth floor with a rifle, four of them said that they saw two people working together. This testimony is inconsistent with the hypothesis of one assassin acting alone.

None of the above discrepancies is trivial and they make it impossible to accept Mr. Cohen's claim that Oswald alone killed Kennedy.

WILLIAM KELLEY EIDEM
Bethesda, Maryland

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . There are a number of points where Jacob Cohen has not been as accurate and as fair as he should be in dealing with such a serious topic as the murder of a President. For example, he glosses over the fact that Oswald denied killing the President with the remark, "as though guilty people do not deny things all the time." However, assassins typically admit their deeds with open pride. The assassins of Presidents Garfield and McKinley did. The assassin who almost killed President-elect Franklin D. Roosevelt and killed Chicago Mayor Cermak instead did. . . . The Warren Commission portrayed Oswald as having "a highly exaggerated sense of his own importance," but also as having "failed at almost everything he had ever tried to do." Isn't it reasonable to expect such a person, when allegedly "succeeding" in a deed that would make him known throughout the world and put him in the history books, to take some open satisfaction in what he had accomplished? . . .

Mr. Cohen lists a number of alleged lies by Oswald while he was in police custody which, in addition to his refusal to submit to a polygraph test, he suggests indicate Oswald's guilt. However, he conveniently leaves out the details. Oswald refused to submit to a polygraph test until he had been provided with an attorney. Oswald's refusal does not seem sinister if the whole story is revealed. Regarding Oswald's alleged untruthfulness, Mr. Cohen claims that "lies of this sort indicate a 'consciousness of guilt,' especially if they are explicable only by the hypotheses that the accused knows he is guilty." But there is another possible hypothesis which explains Oswald's prevarications: that Oswald could in fact have been innocent and, as he himself said, "just a patsy," set up to take the blame for Kennedy's death. If that was the case, then he could have understandably attempted to avoid admitting things suggestive of guilt. And let us not forget that Oswald never had a lawyer present when he provided the answers that Mr. Cohen says were misleading. . . .

Mr. Cohen also conveniently ignores the fact that the paraffin test given to Oswald revealed the absence of nitrate compounds on Oswald's cheek, and thus indicated that Oswald had not fired a rifle. How, then, could Oswald have fired a rifle three times and a pistol at least four times?

Mr. Cohen mentions Oswald's "historic diary" and speculates that Oswald killed Kennedy in order to "become a hero in Cuba as the assassin of Castro's enemies." But if so, why didn't he admit his guilt? How could he have expected to become a "hero of Cuba" for killing Kennedy if he kept insisting he didn't kill Kennedy? Mr. Cohen also ignores the evidence that Oswald's diary was fabricated. It contains many inconsistencies. For example, in the entry for October 31, 1959, Oswald discussed visiting the U.S. embassy in Moscow and noted that John McVickar had replaced Richard Snyder as head consul. Oswald's entry must have been written twenty months after its stated date, for this change did not happen until August 1961! In the entry that Oswald supposedly wrote on January 5, 1960, he stated his salary at a Minsk factory. But in fact the Soviet monetary devaluation which made one new ruble equal ten old rubles did not take place until a year later! . . .

In contrast to the contention that Kennedy was shot only from the rear, the Zapruder film shows Kennedy's head snapping backward, and a gush of bloody brain tissue spewing backward. Both suggest the impact of a shot from the front. However, the "Oswald-alone" supporters contend that the two effects are actually indicative of a rear entrance wound producing a "jet effect" and a neuromuscular reaction, even though films of people shot in the head in battle and in executions fail to demonstrate such results. . . .

In an attempt to establish the existence of neuromuscular spasms from bullet wounds to the head, films were prepared for the House Select Committee which "reinvestigated" the assassination showing goats shot in the head. . . . But the goat tests were contrived to produce misleading results. The unfortunate goats were shot between the eyes from the front. The goats lurched backward slightly from the physical effect of the bullet impact—not from a neuromuscular reaction. . . . Further, the goats . . . jerked backward, away from—not toward—the source of the bullets. It does not make sense to claim that a goat jerking backward from a shot from the front proves that a man jerked backward when shot from the rear. . . .

Not only did Kennedy's head jerk backward, but a gush of bloody brain matter splattered backward, too. The "Oswald-alone" supporters claim that this gush was a "jet effect" from a rear rather than a frontal wound. Supposedly, when someone is shot in the brain, a jet of brain matter gushes back in the direction from which the bullet came. But this jet effect has never been observed in anyone else shot in the brain. Kennedy is a unique case. Everyone else shot in the brain has had brain tissue splattering out in the same direction as the exiting bullet. . . .

In a recent article in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, the two Kennedy autopsy pathologists mentioned the "beveling effect" of a missile's exit, whereby an exit wound is larger than an entrance wound. The pathologists cite the example of a BB striking a pane of glass and causing a small hole on the entrance side and a much larger hole on the exit side of the pane. But the exit of a BB from a glass pane pushes the pulverized glass particles away from, not toward, the source of the BB. Kennedy's alleged head wound from the rear drove his pulverized brain tissue not away from . . . but back toward the source of the alleged shot, if we believe the Warren Commission. Thus it seems that the beveling effect, which is readily demonstrable, is incompatible with the assumed but undemonstrated jet effect. . . .

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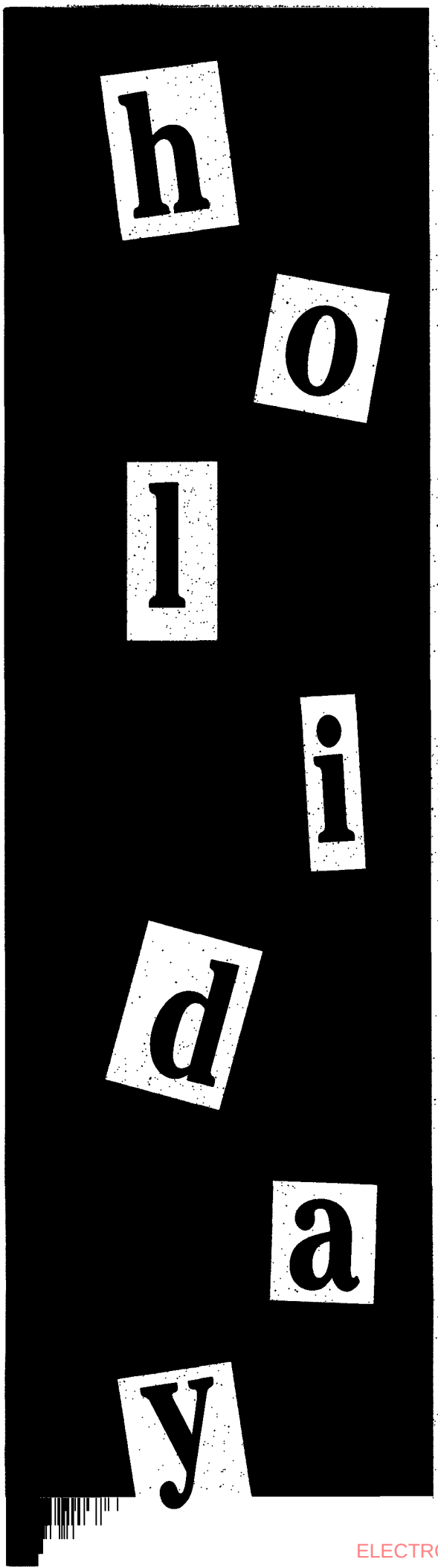

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Thus the implication of the beveling effect applied to Kennedy's head wound is that the projectile which inflicted it exited toward his back—toward, not away from, the Book Depository. Are we to believe that a bullet hit the back of Kennedy's head, made a 150-degree change of direction inside his brain, and then exited back toward the Book Depository? . . .

Evidently, Kennedy was shot from the front, while undoubtedly someone was also shooting at him from the rear. Was Oswald a gunman?

Mr. Cohen claims: "Two eyewitnesses who saw the gunman in the window identified Oswald as the gunman." This is untrue. Two witnesses, Howard Leslie Brennan and Amos Lee Euins, claimed they saw a man in the sixth-floor window of the Book Depository with a rifle. Euins believed the man was either a black or a "white man with a bald spot on top of his head." Neither description fits Oswald. Euins himself does not believe that the man he saw was Oswald. . . .

To finger Oswald, the Warren Commission relied upon the testimony of Brennan, who claimed the person he saw was standing up when he fired the rifle. The Warren Commission stated that he erred, that Oswald could not have been standing up, but still accepted his testimony. When shown Oswald at a police lineup, Brennan could not identify him. After changing his mind three times, Brennan finally decided that the gunman he had seen was Oswald—on December 17, 1963, after a session with FBI agents, a transcript of which was not made. Yet according to the Warren Commission, Brennan gave a detailed description of Oswald to the Dallas police. But the Commission did not explain how Brennan could have accurately estimated Oswald's age, physical build, weight, and height from seeing him kneeling in a window over 100 feet away.

JOSEPH FORBES
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . It is obvious that Jacob Cohen has not studied the evidence, or he would not keep making so many obvious and simple mistakes. Simple stupidity cannot explain such a pattern of deliberate propaganda.

Mr. Cohen's most obvious error, which then leads to other erroneous conclusions, is his misidentification of Zapruder's position on the grassy knoll. Zapruder was *not* behind the picket fence, he was 44 feet in *front* of the fence. Anyone who knows anything about the JFK assassination knows that simple fact. . . .

While I agree that the "badge man" is an optical illusion, Mr. Cohen misidentifies the grassy-knoll gunman's location to belittle the possibility of any gunman shooting from the knoll. The "badge man" would have been behind the fence, almost directly behind Zapruder. The real grassy-knoll gunman, as independently located by the House Assassinations Committee acoustical study, is seen in Mary Moorman's Polaroid, taken just after—not before—the head shot, behind the fence and ten feet up from the corner. . . . Notice that Mr. Cohen does not tell you about that real person. He was well-hidden and appeared only briefly. Yet a few people reported seeing him, just as only a few of the 692-plus people reported seeing a gunman in the Texas Book Depository.

Why must the burden of seeing the grassy-knoll gunman rest on Zapruder? Zapruder was concentrating on filming the President's motorcade driving down Elm Street. His eye never left the camera's viewfinder. To hunt for potential assassins he would have needed to stop filming and turn around on that narrow pedestal, not a pleasant task given his vertigo. . . . His secretary was behind him to his left, holding him steady by the waist. If she had glanced to the right, about all she would have seen would have been Zapruder. If she had let go of Zapruder to turn around, Zapruder probably would have fallen off the pedestal. . . .

Yet, in fact, Zapruder did identify the location of the grassy-knoll gunman. Zapruder said that the shot came from behind him and that he heard the shot whistle past his right ear. That would place the origin somewhere near the picket fence. Notice, again, that Mr. Cohen does not reveal that information.

Now, just a few brief words about the "single-bullet" theory. It was the Warren Commission, David Belin especially, which imposed that 5.6-second limit for three shots, not the critics. The commissioners assumed that Z-313 was the last shot of only three. They desperately wanted the other two shots to have been fired by Oswald from his sniper's nest in the Texas Book Depository. Because it appeared that President Kennedy was unhurt before disappearing behind the sign, they assumed that the earliest possible hit would have been at Z-210. If the Zapruder camera was running at 18.3 frames per second, those 103 frames gave them only 5.6 seconds. JFK was clearly hit by Z-225. If Z-225 had been the second shot, then 2.3 seconds before that would have been at about Z-183. But Oswald's trajectory to the limousine was blocked by a tree from Z-166 to Z-209, so the Warren Commission thought it was unlikely that the first shot would have been through the tree. That is why they thought the first shot came no earlier than Z-210. That is the origin of the 5.6-second limit for three shots. If Mr. Cohen is such a great defender of the Warren Commission, let him defend its logic on that.

Interestingly, Mr. Cohen seems to take heart from the fact that even the House Assassinations Committee endorsed the "single-bullet" theory. However, there is an interesting twist here. The Warren Commission stated that the only time when both JFK and Connally could have been in the right alignment for the "single bullet" was between Zapruder frames 210 and 226, when they were hidden from Zapruder's view by a sign (then how the hell could anyone see this supposedly perfect alignment?). Then the House Assassinations Committee tells us that its match-up of the acoustical data places the timing of the "single-bullet" shot at Z-190, the only time when JFK and Connally were in perfect alignment for a "single bullet," when JFK and Connally are clearly visible and clearly not in perfect alignment, plus the shot would have had to go through the tree. It seems that no matter which Zapruder frame you choose, JFK and Connally are always in perfect alignment for the "single-bullet" theory, regardless of how impossible the shot.

I don't expect that COMMENTARY will allow a debate on the issues and evidence, but at least you should be made aware of the factual errors in Jacob Cohen's article. . . .

W. ANTHONY MARSH
Somerville, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Jacob Cohen's "Yes, Oswald Alone Killed Kennedy" is persua-

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sive, but I would be much better convinced if he would elaborate on why Jack Ruby killed Oswald.

ELLIOTT J. HOWARD
New York City

JACOB COHEN writes:

Here is the point of view from which I write: I believe that there is an objective truth, which is to say that events actually happen in one way and no other, and that a correct account of the events is true. (One of the wonderments of working at a university is to notice how often this self-evident axiom is challenged, subverted, scoffed at, or ignored in the toniest scholarly discourse of our day.) However, this axiom has a corollary which helps explain why so much controversy attaches to the reconstruction of factual reality. While it is the case that things happen in only one way, it is also indubitable that one can *imagine* them happening otherwise; the truth is one but the imaginative possibilities are many. The evidence which trails every human event is usually ambiguous and therefore defense attorneys and conspiracists are never at a loss for words. The more evidence there is, the more alternative possibilities one can imagine, but also, I have found, the more clear the singular truth becomes. But because of the notorious impossibility of proving a negative and also because it is always possible to develop elaborate conspiracy theories which, if believed, discredit the overwhelming burden of contrary evidence, one can never "prove" a given version of reality to a certainty. All one can say, with William of Occam, is that a sufficient, direct, and simple explanation is to be preferred to a monumentally complicated one. In other words, if doubt is to prevail, it should be "reasonable" and not just imaginable. I do not and obviously cannot say that conspiracy theories about the Kennedy assassination are unimaginable or impossible; what I say is that the ones I have seen are unreasonable and mostly absurd.

As illustration of the foregoing, consider passing comments in even these, mainly supportive, letters. Philip J. Schiller has the "feeling" that there might have been a "lone accomplice," but he "certainly" believes that government officials were not part of the killing. My question to him is, what is the basis of that "feeling" and also that "certainty"? If the feeling arises from a vague general impression created by the Himalaya of conspiracist allegations about multiple gunmen, then I say that complete analysis would show that those writings are incorrect in every crucial respect. I know of no objective basis for Mr. Schiller's "feeling," although I certainly understand his desire to rewrite the often disappointing scripts which reality presents to us. Nor is there any basis for his "certainty" about the government, although, of course, I share his hunch.

Howard R. Harris, also supportive, offers the suggestion that the double hit, Kennedy and Connally, took place in Zapruder frame 235 and not a second earlier. As I say in my article, if he will look at Kennedy's and, particularly, Connally's position in that frame, he will see that the Governor could not have received his five wounds at that time unless the bullet made several twists and U-turns in mid-air. Indeed, Z-235 is just a sixth of a second before the time (Z-238) when Oliver Stone and the conspiracist literature he summarizes claim that Connally was struck. The theory is untenable for both frames. The Warren Commission's account of an earlier hit is simple, elegant, and direct; a hit at Z-235 or Z-238 requires the very "magical" behavior which Stone and the others attribute to the Warren Commission.

Mike Sylwester and Ivan W. Parkins should study the same frames. Mr. Sylwester writes: "It does not seem that Connally was hit by that first bullet, because of his position and unpained expression." If Connally was hit later, timing is an issue, he says. But he wasn't. I have no idea of what he means by his "position," which—as has been pointed out by the Warren Commission, the Rockefeller Commission, the House Assassinations Committee Panel, the review of the case by the *Nova* TV series, a photograph analysis by the Itek Corporation, and analysis by me and others—was in perfect alignment to receive all his wounds precisely and *only* at the time Kennedy was first struck. That was less than a second before he first got a pained expression. Delayed reactions of that brief sort are not uncommon.

More to the point, as I have repeatedly pointed out: Connally cannot have been hit later, when Josiah Thompson, Stone, and their confreres say he was, precisely because of his position in those later frames. In 1975, when Thompson wrote to COMMENTARY to protest an article of mine on the subject ["Conspiracy Fever," October 1975], he conspicuously did not engage me on this most pivotal of factual points. What I said to him then still holds: this is not an arguable point, like Hamlet and Polonius disagreeing about whether a cloud resembles a camel or a whale, it is as plain as day.

On a related point, Mr. Parkins tries to salvage a somewhat later hit of Connally by suggesting, as others have, that Connally's wrist might have been hit separately by yet another (missing) bullet. A fair hypothesis, an imaginable alternative. But did it happen that way? As I have pointed out, this theory needs to explain why lead taken from Connally's wrist has been shown, by neutron-activation analysis, to be identical to lead in the bullet from Oswald's rifle which struck his back, exited his chest, and lodged in his thigh. Is the analysis faulty? Are the scientists lying and fabricating elaborate scientific reports? Is it only a coincidence that Connally was in a perfect position to receive all his wounds at the time, earlier, when a bullet exited from Kennedy's throat in a trajectory which would have carried it right into Connally's back? William of Occam would protest against this elaborate substitution for a simple and sufficient explanation.

Jerry Spindel has added to my argument and I am grateful for the help, and so has Eric Paddon by further discrediting Jean Hill. Let me supplement his information: not only did Jean Hill claim to see a puppy dog between the President and his wife, but S.M. Holland (my thanks to Avinoam Freedman for the correction), one of those who reported a puff of smoke over the knoll, also said he saw a man with a machine gun arise in the back of the President's limousine. Needless to say, the Zapruder and other films of the car show no such weapon. Further: A.J. Millican, who indeed said he heard eight shots, claims to have heard the last of them five minutes after the assassination, at a time when Kennedy was being wheeled into the Parkland Hospital.

Don B. Kates, Jr. and Valerie J. Klein sound as if they could give a fine course on the history of assassination in America. For the most part I concur with and applaud

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their letter. Two caveats, however: they say that a shot at Kennedy's back as his car turned away from Oswald was easier than one at his front, when his car approached Oswald's perch. Actually, Oswald could have shot Kennedy in the chest as he approached; the first shot after he turned away was through the leaves of a tree, which seems more difficult to me. Many have asked why Oswald didn't shoot earlier, suggesting, as Stone does, that he wanted to wait until Kennedy had turned toward the grassy knoll and was in the range of the gunman there. My answer, of course, is that this is unlikely because there was no gunman there. I'm not sure we could settle the question of why he waited even if we asked Oswald. Maybe it's easier to shoot someone in the back than the front. Maybe he didn't spot the President, amid the rush of police and cars in the caravan, until after he had passed. Maybe the delay reveals some ambivalence on his part. We'll never know; however, since Oswald is the lone gunman, speculation is entirely academic.

With regard to Kennedy's politics, he was perceived to be a Communist by the extreme Right and a fanatical anti-Communist by the extreme Left. Either misperception could, imaginably, have provoked a killing by fanatics and if it did, his actual politics are irrelevant. It is always possible to imagine "could-have-beens"; that is why I insist that getting the facts straight first is of the essence. With regard to Stone's politics, James W. Salyers is probably right. But my sense of the film *JFK* and all it represents in our culture is that it is about much more than the 60's and the Vietnam war. If Stone is right about the assassination, then whirl is king, and only a total revolution can replace it. The conspiracists, as I see them, worship chaos more deeply than any political agenda, which is why serious leftists deplored Stone's film as infantile fantasy.

William Kelley Eidem suggests that X-rays and photos of the President are fabrications, as indeed they would need to have been if a second gunman shot at and hit the President. In Mr. Eidem's telling, these important documents are not just fake, but crudely and transparently so, and the scientists perpetrating this fraud are not only venal but monumentally clumsy. For reasons I offer at length in my article, I believe that both the X-rays and photos are of Kennedy, taken the night of the assassination, and so too has every expert who has examined them for signs of inauthenticity. Studying other conspiracy allegations, one finds the motif of the crude and transparent frameup arising again and again: the hotel registration card in the Rosenberg case is probably the classic example. It helps support a vision of a world driven by conspiracies so brutal, of powers so overbearing, that they do not scruple at scrupulosity. Not being a member of that congregation, I find such allegations funny.

About the shadows in the backyard photos, over and over again those photos have been shown to be authentic by teams of experts who published their findings. As Mr. Eidem knows, those photos of Oswald holding a rifle were taken on his camera to the exclusion of all others in the world. His wife remembers taking the photos eight months before the assassination. They were found among his effects the day of the assassination, as was the camera, and they are perfectly useless as evidence against him, for a photo cannot establish that the rifle in it was the actual murder rifle. Is Mr. Eidem suggesting that the FBI (or whoever) stole the camera, staged the photo, clumsily pasted Oswald's head onto someone else's body, planted the photos, and persuaded Marina to lie, all for the purpose of proving something which other evidence proves much better, namely, that Oswald possessed the gun which fired all the bullets recovered? As for the Mauser tale: if a Mauser was used, why were all the bullets and shells recovered fired from Oswald's Mannlicher-Carcano? Did the conspiracy shoot him with an Italian rifle and then leave a German one to be discovered? Why? Seymour Weitzman later admitted that he erred in calling the recovered gun, Oswald's, a German Mauser. Human beings make mistakes, Mr. Eidem, don't be frightened by that revelation.

Let us turn to the suspicious Joseph Forbes who asks why Oswald would lie about killing the President: lots of political figures lie when caught; most relevant to

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Oswald, I believe, is Fidel Castro, his hero, who when he was caught for revolutionary activity denied those activities and then later triumphantly confessed, before the world, in open court. The Rosenbergs, also heroes of Oswald, insisted on their innocence to the end as well. As for "consciousness of guilt," as I said, lies of the sort Oswald indubitably told do not of themselves prove guilt, though they confirm the impression. The paraffin tests on Oswald's hands were positive, the one on his cheek was negative. But so was the test on the cheek of an FBI man who test-fired his rifle. The paraffin test is unreliable and is used as an interrogatory device to break witnesses; it is not admissible as evidence. If Oswald did not fire the cheap rifle he carried to the Book Depository that morning, the rifle which shot all the bullets recovered, who did? And why would a conspiracy which has fabricated as many documents as is alleged by conspiracists, not have faked a paraffin test? I do not dispute that Oswald's diary was inaccurate and fabricated, in fact I insist on the point. It was fabricated by him, in his handwriting, with his misspellings, proof of his rich fantasy life. That is why I referred to it.

As for the goats, heartlessly murdered: Mr. Forbes does not tell us that those tests were conducted solely to test the *speed* of a neuromuscular reaction, not the nature of it. As doctors who conducted the test pointed out, Kennedy's physical movements after being struck in the head cannot be explained by any bullet or bullets, from any direction. The violent jerk of his body comes within the allowable time of a strike to the brain, as the goats prove. As for Mr. Forbes's rehashing of other conspiracy arcana, I can only refer him back to my article.

Turning to the reckless W. Anthony Marsh, while he clears me of the charge of stupidity, he suggests that I was lying when I placed Zapruder and his secretary behind the gunman, and behind the stockade fence, rather than, as he insists, "44 feet in *front* of the fence." The apparent contradiction is easily explained; it depends upon what one means by "the fence." Every prior observer, critics included, have meant by "the fence" the long stretch of fencing, nearly 100 feet, running parallel to Elm Street, down which the presidential limousine was traveling. At the end of that long stretch the fence turns at approximately a right angle back from Elm Street a short distance, perhaps twenty feet. In a sketch which Mr. Marsh sent accompanying his letter he makes the short distance long and the long distance short, as if "the fence" were that short appendage rather than the long leg which everyone has always identified as the "picket fence." With that little trick he can get Zapruder in front of the gunman and "44 feet in front of the fence."

If, as Mr. Marsh says, Zapruder were 44 feet in front of the fence, or what everyone has always called the fence, he would have been on Elm Street and in danger of being struck by the limousine. Mr. Marsh's argument is so much stuff and nonsense. The question is: where was the alleged gunman vis-à-vis Zapruder and his secretary as the President's moving car came in front of the two of them? From that perspective, looking down on Elm, the alleged gunman is exactly as I described him, to Zapruder's right and slightly ahead of him, such that Zapruder, and his secretary, facing Elm, glancing to their right, would have seen the gunman, from behind, clearly and directly. And they would have seen him even if he was crouching behind the fence in order to pop up to shoot the President and then immediately pop down again, as in Mr. Marsh's hilarious scenario. (No wonder the gunman missed entirely; as Mr. Marsh tells it he took no time to find the President, aim the gun, and fire it.) Zapruder and his secretary were standing on a pedestal from which they could look down on the entire area behind the fence. I have stood on the pedestal and I know from direct experience how easily the alleged crouching gunman could have been seen.

Mr. Marsh avoids the salient point, which is the absurdity of a plot in which the idea was that the gunman who gets away unnoticed was supposed to stand up in broad daylight, in clear view of hundreds, and their cameras, and *not* be seen firing a gun. (Six people saw a gun and/or gunman in the Depository where Oswald was.) Zapruder and his secretary could easily have seen the gunman firing or immediately thereafter; the gun exploded in their right ears from about 50 feet away and all they had to do was turn their heads to the right. They could have seen him preparing in the minutes before the President's arrival. (How could he have known when the entourage, fifteen minutes late, would arrive?) They didn't, no one did, although hundreds could easily have; and no pictures show a gunman. Was all that intended?

On the timing. The Warren Commission concluded, correctly in my view, that Kennedy was first struck between frames 210 and 224, which is a time when Kennedy and Connally were in alignment to receive their wounds. (I have stressed that that was also the only time when Connally was in position to receive all his indubitable wounds.) With regard to whether the bullet which struck the two of them was the first fired or not, the Warren Report says: "The evidence is inconclusive as to whether it was the first, second, or third shot which missed." (See Chapter III, "The Shot that Missed.") As I said, 5.6 seconds is approximately the time between the two hits, not the time of all the shots. Mr. Marsh's statement in his letter that the Warren Commission "imposed" a 5.6-second limit "for three shots" is flat-out false.

Two final screechers. Mr. Marsh asks how analysts could have specified Kennedy's and Connally's alignment when the two were behind a sign during the crucial period Z-210-226. Those sixteen frames comprise less than one second. The alignment before and after is perfect and the assumption that the two men did not spring out of and back into alignment in less than a second seems sound to me. Finally, Mr. Marsh taxes me with the fact that at one point the House Committee, relying on the acoustical evidence, places the single hit at Z-190. (Relying upon the alignment of the two men the Committee placed that hit exactly where the Warren Commission placed it.) What Mr. Marsh doesn't tell you is that, as I pointed out in my article, the acoustical evidence has now been totally discredited after reexamination by the National Academy of Science, and with that discreditation passes another shred of conspiracist credibility.

Finally, there is Elliott J. Howard's brief question about Jack Ruby. I did not deal with this inescapable question in my article, but I think he knows that I could have. An extended treatment would show that Ruby walked into the basement of the police de-

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partment and directly into Oswald as Oswald was about to be transferred to another jail. He shot him then and there; if Ruby had arrived moments later, he would not have had the opportunity to shoot Oswald. The timing was perfect. When you know all that is known about Oswald's and Ruby's movements that morning it turns out that Ruby could not possibly have known when Oswald would be in the basement. The transfer was an hour after the announced time and the encounter was entirely accidental. And consider this: if Ruby shot Oswald to silence him, why wasn't Ruby killed to silence *him*? (He died years later of cancer.) Was Ruby a kamikaze pilot ordered to kill Oswald on television and spend the rest of his life in jail, taking the rap? Oswald was interrogated for an entire weekend; he even appeared on a televised news conference during which time he could have blurted out some incriminating information about the conspiracy. Why wasn't he killed earlier? Etc., etc.

As I have tried to present the matter: Oswald killed the President by himself, there were no other gunmen sent by the Mafia, the CIA, or any of the other forces allegedly behind the killing. Nor am I persuaded that anyone helped Oswald plan the killing, or influenced him to do so. In particular, every speculation linking Oswald to Ruby, every alleged sighting, has been punctured. If what I have just said is correct, the notion of Ruby as a second lonely nut is less difficult to accept. I cannot, I would not, silence imaginative speculation about what might have been; I can only suggest that such imaginings submit themselves to the discipline of finding the singular factual reality which is the fundament of all events.

The Jewish Family

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his review of *Saving Remnants*, by Sara Bershtel and Allen Graubard [Books in Review, July], I was dismayed by Edward Norden's use of an interview that I gave to the authors. I offered there reflections on the divergent responses of my two sisters and myself to our Jewish identities: one of my sisters joined Chabad, the other intermarried, and I became a secular Jewish historian. Yet Mr. Norden treats this account as if it was intended to be at once foolish and comic and thereby creates an unrecognizable caricature of my family.

Some of the blame lies with Bershtel and Graubard: they use a strange style of paraphrasing in the guise of quotation that typically flattens or distorts what the interviewee actually said. In my interview, they inexplicably quote me describing my family as "crazy." Now, I never said any such thing and certainly not in the disparaging and judgmental way that Mr. Norden attributes to me. On the contrary, my family has always been characterized by mutual tolerance and respect for diversity.

Here lies the crux of the issue, for what is at stake is greater than one American-Jewish family. Although he never clearly states his position, Mr. Norden seems to hanker after a homogeneous Jewish community, which probably never existed. If one reads between the lines, his model seems to be one that is religiously Orthodox and politically right-wing. But the modern world precludes such uniformity and not only for American Jews. *All* Jews today, including those who live in Israel, are Jews by choice and the inevitable consequence of modern culture is diversity and experimentation. Many families in the modern world, Jewish and otherwise, exhibit the sometimes bewildering divergencies that mine does. One can be justly critical of much of modern Jewish culture without a policy of slash-and-burn: there can be no hope of combating this universal modern condition by engaging in an unremitting politics of negativity directed exclusively against American Jews.

I must also register an objection to the way Mr. Norden characterizes me personally, which seems to reflect his dismissive attitude toward Jewish life in general. Although Bershtel and Graubard clearly identify me, Mr. Norden gives the impression that I am an intellectual who professes some marginal and flippant attachment to Judaism and leftist politics. This seems to me an unnecessarily insulting way to describe someone who has devoted his career to writing books and essays on Jewish history and politics, and to creating vital institutions of Jewish learning.

DAVID BIALE
Director, Center for Jewish Studies
Graduate Theological Union
Berkeley, California

EDWARD NORDEN writes:

David Biale's fight isn't with me. It's either with the authors of the book in which he is quoted, or with himself. If he didn't actually characterize his family as "crazy," as the authors quoted him doing, why blame the innocent, dutiful reviewer who then quoted him to that effect, and in full context besides? Mr. Biale's other gripe is that he comes across as not very serious. Again, his own quoted description of himself was of someone with an interest in "Jewish [and] leftist political things." Readers were left to decide whether such interests were serious.

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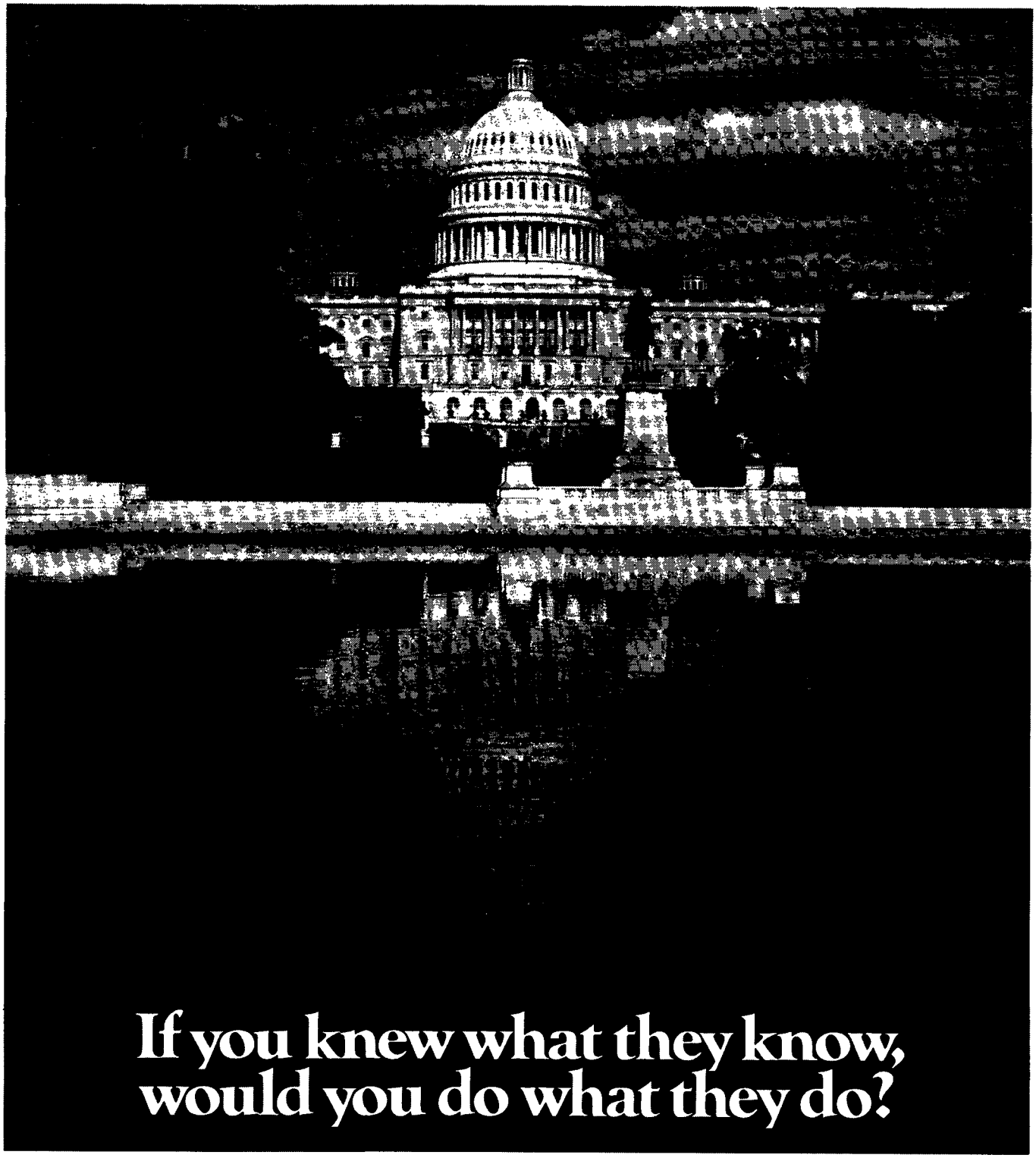

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Why We Still Need SDI

Robert Jastrow and Max M. Kampelman

I

WHY is the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) still on the public agenda? Didn't reputable scientists tell us that it was a scientific and technological impossibility to develop? And didn't they also tell us that even if it should turn out to be feasible, it would be too expensive? Wasn't it ludicrous to hear Ronald Reagan talk about a shield to protect our country from nuclear missiles; and didn't all kinds of "experts" treat the idea of what they called "Star Wars" with derision and contempt? Anyhow, now that the cold war is over, and we no longer have an enemy, why do we need a defense against nuclear missiles at all?

Yet a Congress overwhelmingly controlled by Democrats appropriated a record $4.15 billion for SDI this past year, with the expectation that the sum will not be appreciably cut for the fiscal year which began on October 1, in spite of our nation's fiscal crunch. Why? It surely is not because of pressure by the defense industry for contracts and jobs, because in reality the SDI funding is spread around the country in relatively small amounts.

That is not all. The Russians are now responding affirmatively to the eight-year-old offer of Ronald Reagan that we share technology and learn how to work together to develop defenses against nuclear ballistic missiles that threaten us both. In a talk to the United Nations on January 31, 1992, the Russian President, Boris Yeltsin, asserted: "I think the time has come to consider creating a global system for the protection of the world community" against nuclear missiles. He repeated the call for a global protection system to great applause in his address to the U.S. Congress on June 17, 1992. That same month, Yeltsin and President George Bush agreed in their Washington summit on a shared program for early warning of missile launches. Follow-up meetings of experts took place in Moscow the next month. Russia clearly believes itself to be vulnerable and also wants to preserve its technological base and gain from ours.

At a recent seminar in Erice, Sicily, Dr. E.P. Velikhov, one of Russia's most respected scientists and President Yeltsin's adviser on nuclear matters, strongly urged the development of a global system of defenses against ballistic-missile attacks of all types. Wearing an SDI necktie, he argued that Mutual Assured Protection, rather than the long-cherished Mutual Assured Destruction of the cold war, should guide the new relationship among the U.S., Russia, and other responsible states. Joining other scientists at the seminar, Velikhov emphasized that space-based SDI sensors could have a dual use. In addition to monitoring the skies for missiles, they could, in an ecological role, monitor the skies for environmental damage.

Why the dramatic change? The reason primarily rests on the growing realization that it is much easier to build nuclear weapons than we once thought; and that missiles to hurl them through space directly to their targets are now readily available on the international commercial market. The CIA recently told Congress that in seven or eight years, twenty nations are likely to have ballistic missiles and that perhaps fifteen third-world countries may well have their own missile-production facilities within that time frame.

North Korea, for example, is now producing and selling a more modern weapon than the Scud used by Iraq in Desert Storm. This new weapon, known as Scud-C, has a range of 300-400 miles; and the North Koreans are beginning to deploy a later version, Scud-D, with a 650-mile range. The Scud-D can reach Japan, which does not have an SDI program to defend itself. The North Koreans also have two nuclear reactors that are supposed to start operations later this year, with a combined power level of hundreds of millions of watts, producing enough plutonium to make roughly a bomb a month.

To judge by North Korea's past record, it will sell this expertise as well as the nuclear weapons themselves to anyone with cash. In fact, purchases

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of Scuds and other arms by Libya and other third-world countries have already yielded billions of dollars to North Korea. The extremely high value placed on nuclear weapons in the third world is likely to lead to sales that will dwarf even these amounts.

An incident involving India suggests the price radical terrorists would be willing to pay in order to obtain nuclear weapons. According to the Indian ambassador to the United States, after India exploded its first nuclear weapon, Libya offered to pay an amount comparable to the Indian national debt—about $15 billion at the time—for access to India's nuclear-weapons technology.

II

UNITED NATIONS experts, studying the evidence they collected on the Iraqi nuclear-weapons program, have concluded that at the outbreak of the Gulf war, Iraq was only a year or two from completing a Hiroshima-sized device—the explosive equivalent of 10,000 tons of TNT packed into a warhead small enough to launch from a Scud. The Iraqi bomb-building program was drastically disrupted by the war, but Iraq is already reconstructing some of the nuclear sites bombed by the U.S. and our allies. One of the UN officials on the on-site inspection team reported that technicians working at the Iraqi nuclear-test site at Al Atheer told him, "We are waiting for you to leave."

Iraq has large deposits of uranium within its borders. Most of it is the isotope Uranium-238, a relatively inert variety of uranium whose nucleus does not undergo fission and cannot be used to make bombs. Only 1 percent or so is Uranium-235, the fissionable isotope that can be made to explode. The challenge confronting the Iraqi and other bomb-builders—as it confronted American scientists in World War II—is to separate the desirable Uranium-235 from the unwanted Uranium-238.

As the United States did in the Manhattan Project, Iraq under Saddam Hussein simultaneously pursued several paths in an all-out drive toward the ultimate weapon. After some experimentation, the Iraqis chose two relatively low-tech methods—the calutron and the centrifuge—for concentrating the Uranium-235 in the ore they mined. The UN investigators discovered that the Iraqis were building enough calutrons and centrifuges to make materials for two to four bombs a year.

The Iraqi calutrons and centrifuges are big devices: the calutrons are 18 feet across and weigh 50 tons. Yet all this activity went unnoticed and unsuspected, not only by the UN inspectors but by U.S. intelligence. During the 1980's, Saddam surreptitiously created a complete industrial complex for mining uranium, concentrating the Uranium-235, and designing and testing his own nuclear weapons. Saddam's atomic-bomb program involved altogether some 30 plants. The existence of these plants was never suspected by the International Atomic Energy Authority (IAEA), despite repeated on-site inspections over the course of the decade.

The French and Russians had provided Iraq with a substantial amount of Uranium-235 for use in a research reactor. Every six months for years, teams from the IAEA inspected the half-built reactor and its core of enriched uranium. Each time they reported that all the French and Russian uranium was intact; none had been diverted to illicit weapons projects. The IAEA inspectors, diverted to look elsewhere, failed to detect the existence of the enormous covert Iraqi effort, which was based on uranium supplied by Iraq itself from its own mines.

Iraq had signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty designed to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons. In hindsight it is clear that Saddam used the respectability he achieved as a signer of the treaty as a cover for an enormous secret-weapons program.

THE Iraqi program has been derailed temporarily, but Iran, Libya, Algeria, and North Korea also have large-scale nuclear-weapons projects in progress. China has announced that it will build a 300-million-watt nuclear reactor in Iran, sufficient to produce plutonium for several atomic bombs a year. The Iranians are reported to have received a calutron from China. While a single calutron cannot produce enough Uranium-235 to make a bomb in a reasonable time, the one calutron the Iranians possess can readily be cloned by them into a large number.

Algeria has also received massive assistance from China in its atomic-bomb program, particularly in the construction of a large nuclear reactor suitable for manufacturing plutonium. Plutonium is a nuclear explosive as powerful as Uranium-235 and much easier to produce. The Algerian reactor under construction by Chinese technicians is reported to have a power level of tens of millions of watts and a plutonium output sufficient for two or three bombs a year when completed.

Even more disquieting developments stem from the economic and political turmoil in the former Soviet Union. Russian nuclear scientists, who know all the tricks of designing and building the most advanced nuclear weapons, are paid between $5 and $10 a month at current exchange rates. According to *Science*, they have been offered up to $400,000 a year to share their knowledge with third-world countries.

The same countries that have been pushing their nuclear programs hardest also have been the heaviest investors in ballistic missiles. Several

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have built factories, with assistance mainly from North Korea and China, for turning out large numbers of ballistic missiles in their own countries. When these states also acquire weapons of mass destruction, they will have the means in hand for delivering them to the territories of their traditional enemies. The temptation to settle old quarrels with the ultimate weapon may well be irresistible.

Many nations also have or will soon have the capability for manufacturing equally fearsome chemical and biological weapons. These weapons are agents of mass destruction—as much so as nuclear weapons and considerably cheaper to make. The amount of nerve gas on the head of a pin is sufficient to cause the death of a human being. One 300-millionth of an ounce of anthrax is lethal if inhaled. A few hundred pounds of anthrax, dispersed over a city, can kill one million people at a cost of less than $100,000. In deaths per dollar, anthrax and nerve gas are far more cost-effective than nuclear weapons.

Chemical and biological weapons are not only much cheaper than nuclear weapons, but also far easier to produce. They require only drugstore technology. An Iranian government official recently called them "the poor man's atomic bomb."

UN inspection teams discovered after the Gulf war that Iraq had built plants with a capacity for manufacturing 20,000 pounds of anthrax a year, and 500 tons a year of nerve gas and mustard gas. In future conflicts and peacekeeping operations, American forces situated overseas would be vulnerable to chemical attacks. Iranian missiles tipped with chemical warheads could have wiped out the U.S. forces stationed at the Dhahran air base in Saudi Arabia—less than 200 miles from Iraq, directly across the Persian Gulf. In the Gulf war, U.S. Navy ships were tied up for days at Dhahran while their cargoes were unloaded, easy prey for Scuds armed with nerve gas.

America's allies in Europe are also under the gun. The distance from northern Tripoli to Rome is 600 miles—within the range of missiles being sold in the third world by North Korea and China. Roughly the same distance separates Algiers from Paris. Will our European allies support the U.S. in the next confrontation with an aggressor if he possesses the means of exploding nuclear warheads over Rome and Paris, or dispersing nerve gas and anthrax spores over their populations? Will an American President risk the destruction of the centers of Western civilization by calling the bluff of a nuclear-armed fanatic?

Had Saddam Hussein possessed nuclear weapons capable of striking European and American citizens at the time he invaded Kuwait, it is questionable whether President Bush would have undertaken his military response. Had Saddam's nuclear weapons been only capable of striking Iraq's immediate neighbors, it is not likely we would have been able to persuade any Arab states to join us.

A unique situation has developed in the world in the aftermath of the cold war. The columnist Charles Krauthammer says, "Missiles shrink distance. Weapons of mass destruction multiply power." Through the spread of these devices and the technologies required for their manufacture, smaller states can bring to heel the greatest military power the world has ever known. Applying nuclear, chemical, and bacteriological blackmail, they can prevent the U.S. from using its power in defense of its legitimate interests and for the protection of its friends and allies among the democratic nations.

III

How is the United States to deal with this unprecedented problem? Possible responses include arms-control treaties, deterrence by the threat of devastating retaliation, and an active defense that destroys missiles. Let us look at each of these in turn.

Arms-control treaties and controls over the transfer of weapons technology are attractive, because they appear simple and cost least. But recent experience does not lead to optimism regarding this approach. It is a discouraging fact that Saddam, after signing the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, was able to mount a nuclear-weapons program comparable in scope, though not in genius, to our own Manhattan Project.

Experience with treaties relating to chemical and biological warfare—the 1925 Protocol forbidding the use of poison gases, and the 1972 Convention on Bacteriological and Toxin Weapons—has also been disappointing. Iraq signed the 1925 Protocol, but then used poison gas extensively during its war with Iran. After the Gulf war, UN investigators discovered that Iraq had stockpiled thousands of bombs and artillery shells, filled with nerve gas and mustard gas.

Iraq also signed the 1972 Convention forbidding the production of biological weapons, but admitted to the UN inspection team last year that it had been working on anthrax as well as botulism toxin—possibly, along with cobra venom, the most poisonous substance known. The inspection team unearthed facilities in Iraq for production, testing, and storage of these deadly poisons.

The history of events in Iraq, then, suggests that treaties and controls over technology transfer are readily circumvented by an aggressive and reckless leader set on developing weapons of mass destruction.

The second possible response—the threat of devastating retaliation—is more likely to be an effective deterrent to aggression. This strategy—Mutual Assured Destruction, or MAD, in its superpower context—demonstrated its effectiveness during the standoff between the U.S. and

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the USSR that endured for more than 40 years.

Expert opinion is divided, however, on the value of nuclear deterrence in regional conflicts. On the one hand, Saddam was apparently undaunted by the nuclear arsenal of the United States and had to be driven out of Kuwait. He appeared confident that the U.S. would not initiate the use of nuclear weapons in the Middle East.

On the other hand, Iraq did not use chemical weapons against Israel, although the UN inspection teams found that the Iraqis had large stockpiles of nerve gas and 30 chemically-armed Scud warheads. No doubt sharing in the general belief that Israel possesses nuclear weapons, Saddam probably feared that the Israelis would retaliate with those weapons if he gassed Tel Aviv. In this instance, deterrence by the threat of devastating retaliation seems to have worked.

While deterrence may have worked for Israel in the Gulf war, however, the Israelis cannot count on its working in the future. If Saddam had an arsenal of nuclear weapons and not just 30 chemical warheads, he might have gambled that a surprise attack with nuclear-tipped missiles on Israel's military bases and launch sites would cripple the Israeli forces of retaliation, or at least reduce to a tolerable level their ability to inflict punishment on Iraq.

No sane leader would make that gamble, but that is the weakness in the MAD strategy. It assumes that hostile leaders will be rational and governed by reasonable standards of prudence. If that assumption ever proves wrong, the strategy will fail. When it fails, the failure will be catastrophic. What satisfaction would it be to the Israelis, as their nation is destroyed, to know that they had destroyed the cities of Iraq? There would be some, but not much.

IV

DRIVEN by these doubts, military planners in Israel are moving toward the deployment of a defense that can intercept ballistic missiles in flight and destroy them before they do any damage. The intercepting missiles planned by the Israelis for this job are called Arrows. They are being developed with help from the U.S., and are generically similar to the Patriot, which attracted our attention as a defense against the Scud during Desert Storm, but use a more advanced technology. The latest versions are rockets with "eyes" and "brains"—sensors to see the approaching missile and sufficient computing power to home in on it and explode in its vicinity.*

Estimates of the effectiveness of these intercepting missiles range from 90 percent under idealized conditions down to about 70 percent when they are launched under operational pressures. Assuming an intermediate value of 80 percent, these interceptors would destroy four out of five attacking missiles. If the interceptions occurred at a sufficient altitude, there would be time to target a second shot on the attacking missiles that leaked through the first layer of defense. The second shot would again intercept four in five of the leakers. This means that, with a two-layer defense, only one attacking missile in 25 would reach its target.

A missile defense of this kind, combined with a powerful retaliatory force, would provide a very strong measure of security for Israel. How would Saddam make his plans for an attack on Israel in the face of such a combination of missile defenses and retaliatory forces? Let us assume that he would not launch his missiles against the cities of Israel, because he would know that if he did, the Israeli retaliatory forces would lay waste his homeland in reprisal. He, therefore, might well conclude that he must avoid the cities in his initial attack and instead attempt to cripple Israel's capability for retaliation by attacking Israeli military bases and launch sites.

Could he succeed? A crippling strike against Israel's retaliatory forces would require, in round numbers, some ten nuclear-armed or 100 chemically-armed missiles. If the Israelis targeted two defending rockets against each attacking missile in a two-tier defense, and each rocket had an effectiveness of 80 percent, only one in 25 Iraqi missiles would penetrate the two-tier defense. Thus Saddam would have to launch 250 nuclear-armed or 2,500 chemically-armed missiles against Israel's air bases and launch sites to destroy them. These numbers would daunt even the most imprudent leader.

V

ISRAEL and other friends of the U.S. in the Middle East are not alone in their jeopardy. The capitals of our European allies and U.S. naval and ground forces in the Middle East will also soon be at risk from chemical attacks originating in the radical terrorist states of the Middle East. The threat will increase as some of these states acquire nuclear weapons.

Hence the protection of our forces overseas and those of our allies is also beginning to figure in U.S. planning for a ballistic-missile defense force.

SDI has under development several intercepting missiles that can counter these threats. The first ballistic-missile interceptor that will be avail-

* The key to the effectiveness of the new missile defenses is the miniaturized computer. Remarkable progress in the miniaturization of computer circuits enables millions of transistors and other electronic components to be packed into a silicon chip the size of a thumbnail. The density with which these electronic components are packed into the chip is beginning to approach the density of the neurons in the human brain. This miniaturization permits defense scientists to build highly sophisticated computer "brains" into a very small missile.

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able to the U.S. is an improved version of the Patriot, scheduled for early deployment. The other interceptors under development by SDI—which go by the names LEAP, THAAD, Erint, and E2I—use more advanced technology, and will take longer to develop. All these defenses are based on the ground. The miniaturized interceptors based in space, which hit their targets by swooping down from orbit, have had their development at least temporarily banned by Congress. We believe, nonetheless, that they hold great promise.

The SDI interceptor called LEAP will be particularly useful in the Middle East and Mediterranean theaters. First, it is extremely capable, with a first-class set of eyes and brains. Second, it weighs only twelve pounds and can be mounted on a Navy Standard Missile and fired from the deck of an Aegis cruiser. Third, this Navy-LEAP defense against ballistic missiles could be available as early as 1995 or 1996—earlier than any comparable program.

Stationed in the Mediterranean, Navy ships outfitted with LEAP interceptors could be an effective defense against nuclear-tipped missiles launched from hostile states in the Middle East toward Europe. They would also protect U.S. allies in the Middle East itself against the threat of nuclear destruction by their neighbors.

THAAD is a highly capable interceptor, but will be available somewhat later than LEAP. THAADs are small enough to be loaded in considerable numbers into a C5A Air Force transport and dispatched quickly to any theater in the world in which a crisis erupts. A THAAD intercepts the approaching missile at altitudes as great as 100 miles (compared to the Patriot's five to ten miles) and also has a large "footprint," or defended area.

The Israeli Arrow is intermediate in capability between the advanced Patriot and THAAD. Its defending area is not as large as THAAD's, but it is well suited to the requirements of that small nation.

The advanced Patriot, Navy-LEAP, THAAD, and Arrow will probably be ready in time to counter the high-performance ballistic missiles which are now becoming available in the Middle East as a result of the marketing efforts of North Korea and China. The Scuds fired against Israel in the Gulf war were terror weapons, too inaccurate to be used against an air-force base or any other target smaller than a city. Syria recently purchased from North Korea that greatly improved version of the Scud called the Scud-C, which is sufficiently accurate to be effective against such small targets as military bases and missile-launch sites. The Scud-C also has a greater range and can reach any part of Israel from Syria. Iran and Libya are reported to be negotiating with North Korea for the purchase of more Scud-Cs, and for the construction of plants to manufacture Scud-Cs within their borders.

The introduction of Scud-Cs into the Middle East—as well as the even more accurate M-9s that are now being marketed by China in the region—magnifies the danger to U.S. forces stationed overseas, as well as to Israel and our European allies, in any future replay of the Gulf war. This beefing-up of missile capability that is now going on in the Middle East is particularly disturbing when viewed in the context of burgeoning capabilities for the production of nuclear and chemical weapons by Middle Eastern states.

VI

There was an unexpected development in the Gulf war. When the first Scuds hit Israel, Americans and Israelis manning the Patriot batteries looked up into the sky and saw something that surprised them. The bright trail of the approaching missile was clearly visible, heated to incandescence by the friction of its rapid motion through the atmosphere. As they watched, the trail divided into two or three separate trails, and those divided again, until there was a veritable shower of light.

They caught on quickly to what was happening. The Scuds were breaking up into pieces as they descended through the atmosphere, and each piece, as it melted and vaporized, created its own incandescent trail. Later, when coalition forces examined captured Iraqi Scuds, the reason for the breakup became apparent. The Scuds had been cobbled together by the Iraqis out of pieces of rocket tank to give them the longer range needed to reach Israel. The workmanship was poor, and as a Scud descended into the denser air of the lower atmosphere during the final stages of the flight, it broke up, first into a few large pieces, and then into a number of smaller fragments.

The Patriot, confronted by this shower of fragments, could not tell which one contained the Scud warhead, and tended to go after the largest fragment because it generated the strongest radar reflection. But the largest fragment often did not contain the warhead. As a consequence, even when a Scud was successfully intercepted by a Patriot, its warhead often reached the ground intact and exploded.

Later, the Patriot crews noticed a useful fact. The piece containing the warhead was relatively heavy compared to the other pieces, and barreled through the atmosphere without being slowed so much by air drag. After a short time, the warhead pulled out in front of the shower of Scud fragments and led the pack. Word went back to Raytheon, the builders of the Patriot, to design a new computing program that would analyze the radar reflections to see which fragment was ahead of the rest, and make that the prime target for the Patriot interceptor. The new software went into action a few weeks later, just before the end

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of the brief Desert Storm campaign, and dramatically improved the Patriot's score.*

But there was a downside to this experience that was not lost on U.S. and Israeli experts. Nor, we can be confident, were its implications less than clear to third-world military planners studying the lessons of the Gulf war. Through poor workmanship, the Iraqis had accidentally created a missile that could deploy decoys capable of drawing the Patriot's attention away from the warhead.

What had been done by accident in the Gulf war could be and surely would be done deliberately, with even greater effectiveness, in a next Middle East war. Throwing out simple decoys does not require high technology, and is well within the capabilities of all the third-world states that are likely to stir up trouble.

VII

It is a modest advance in concept to proceed from decoys to cluster munitions—warheads built to hold not just a single bomb, but a group of up to 100 bomblets. Cluster munitions of this kind are available in the weapons market, manufactured *inter alia* by companies in South Africa and Argentina. The bomblets can be modified easily to survive a rocket launch and the heat of their reentry into the atmosphere.

After a missile has burned out and started to coast through space, it disperses the separate bomblets in the cluster. Each bomblet is a target that the SDI defense has to shoot down, so the defending force has to counter up to 100 times as many objects as before. For a massive attack by 100 missiles, that would mean 10,000 credible targets for the interceptors.

Since it would be extremely costly to deploy enough interceptors to shoot down 10,000 bomblets, the only feasible defense against a Scud armed with cluster munitions is the destruction of the Scud before it deploys the cluster. This means that the Scud must be intercepted in its boost phase, before it burns out and starts to coast. At that early stage in the rocket's flight, the bomblets are still packed together in the warhead, and the SDI defense only has to shoot down one object: the missile.

How can the missile be destroyed in its boost phase? At this point it has not yet covered much distance, and may be hundreds of miles from its target. For the Scuds used to attack Israel, the boost phase lasts only about 70 seconds. The Patriot, Arrow, and THAAD defenses being developed by the U.S. and Israel do not have the speed needed to cover a distance of hundreds of miles in that short a time.

This takes us to the space-based interceptors being developed by SDI. They are very fast and will provide a very effective boost-phase defense against cluster munitions. But these space defenses are not slated for deployment until the turn of the century, whereas cluster munitions could become a reality in the third world in less than five years. In other words, a very dangerous threat will exist from roughly 1995 until the deployment of space-based defenses at the end of the decade or early in the next century.

Fortunately, there seems to be a way to counter the cluster-munitions threat in time. The miniaturized SDI interceptors can be slung under the belly of a drone—a pilotless, high-altitude airplane—and dispatched in the direction of the attacking missile as soon as its launch has been detected. The task is to use the "eye" mounted on warning satellites to detect the launch promptly and provide adequate warning time. Traveling at four to five miles per second, the interceptor should be able to catch a Scud-type missile in its boost phase even if the launch site of the Scuds is hundreds of miles distant. The miniaturized interceptors designed for deployment in space, if slung under the drone, would do the job. So would the somewhat less brilliant LEAP interceptors. The exceptional smarts of the space-based interceptors are useful for the drone defense but not absolutely essential.

We excel at building miniaturized interceptors like LEAP. The Israelis excel at building drones. Countering the threat of mass destruction by the marriage of outstanding technologies in the two countries represents strategic cooperation at its best.

VIII

SDI has been roundly criticized by some who say it is moving too quickly toward deployment of missile defense, and by others who say it is moving too slowly. One reporter recently wrote that SDI is a nine-year-old program that has spent $27 billion "without deploying an anti-missile missile." The critic ignored the fact that SDI has been primarily a research-and-development program mandated *not* to deploy in space because that would violate our Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM) of 1972 with the Soviet Union.

While praise of SDI is considered by some to be poor form, we have a high regard both for the SDI organization and for Congress, which have jointly worked to overcome a most difficult combination of technical, diplomatic, and economic obstacles. Pressures from several quarters to kill SDI have been successfully resisted. The development of theater-missile defenses with at least

* The strategy of going after the object that leads the pack may not work if there is a next time. It would not be difficult for the attacking force to include on the Scud a few cannonball decoys—small, dense objects that barrel through the atmosphere even faster than the warhead. Cannonball decoys would ensure that the warhead was no longer the lead object.

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minimally adequate funding has been undertaken. Congress has been warm to ground-based defenses but cool to defenses using interceptors based in space, although a space-based defense, in our opinion, would be a highly cost-effective approach to global protection for the U.S. and its allies.

"Eyes" in space—satellites that detect the heat of a missile launch—are as important as the interceptors. Satellite "eyes" played a critical role in the Gulf war in giving the Patriot crews advance warning that a Scud was on its way. A mature SDI system should include both space-based and ground-based sensors and interceptors.

The SDI program has been able to maintain its bipartisan orientation primarily thanks to the leadership of Senator Sam Nunn, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, and Representative Les Aspin, chairman of the House Armed Services Committee. It has not been an easy task, since partisanship is usually the lifeblood of American politics and because aggressive opposition to SDI has come from many congressional Democrats. This has made the Nunn-Aspin effort all the more noteworthy.

THE debate in the country and the Congress continues. How best to deploy land-based intercept missiles? How efficient is the program? Are administration claims about SDI successes exaggerated? Are short-range "theater defenses" adequate for our security, or will we end up protecting our allies and not ourselves? Should we unilaterally move to end the ABM treaty restrictions on SDI testing and deployment, or should we wait until we can negotiate satisfactory amendments with the Russians? Is the administration faithfully and conscientiously carrying out the provisions and philosophy of the 1991 Missile Defense Act, ably formulated and consensus-driven by Senator Nunn, which provides for a single land-based intercept site with 100 advanced interceptors in Grand Forks, North Dakota—the first of six such sites designed to protect our whole country from missile attack?

Nunn and Aspin are each committed to the deployment of missile defenses against limited attacks on the United States. Both are urging an SDI program to defend against missile attacks by terrorist rogue states, or through accidental missile firings. These initiatives have strong support from Yeltsin as well as the Russian military. A number of European leaders, most recently Swedish Prime Minister Carl Bildt and Dutch Foreign Minister Hans van den Broek, support them.

It is interesting here to note that Dr. Velikhov, Yeltsin's scientific adviser on nuclear matters, shares the belief that the SDI space program—including not only space-based interceptors, but also the extremely important satellite "eyes" or sensors located in space for prompt early warning of missile launches—should not be neglected. Indeed, contrary to many judgments in the U.S. government, he argues that the space-based defense does not violate the ABM treaty, since it would now be jointly operated.

A global protection system, including ground- and space-based elements, to defend the international community against ballistic missiles requires serious cooperation among nations. The SDI program seems now to be directed toward that end. The United States obviously no longer needs to focus as much on a massive attack coming from the Soviet Union. Instead we are addressing the threat from limited attacks by missiles with a variety of ranges and launched, whether accidentally or deliberately, from any place to any other place in the world. Nuclear proliferation is a major stimulus to the effort.

A joint high-level U.S.-Russia collaboration now exists and is helping to bring an SDI global protection system into operation. The teams working on SDI collaboration have a mandate to focus on the sharing of early-warning data on missile launches with a view to establishing a communications center for global protection. This will require changes in existing treaty arrangements and the formation of some new legal regimes. How to achieve global protection against missile attacks without threatening the security interests of any nation may well turn out to be a more difficult challenge than the scientific and engineering tasks that now appear under control.

One thing is certain: unless that challenge can be met, and unless the assault on SDI can be overcome, our allies and our own forces overseas will be left vulnerable to a devastating threat.

On the other hand, the end of the cold war has created a millennial opportunity to build a safer and better world. It is clear, as we contemplate the new dangers arising out of bitter regional conflicts in Europe, the Middle East, and Asia, that the defenses developed by SDI have become an essential component of that new world order.

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The Strange Debate Over Bosnia

Joshua Muravchik

THE carnage in Bosnia, and especially the atrocities committed against Muslims there by local Serbs, aided and abetted by the government of Slobodan Milosevic in Belgrade—the "ethnic cleansing," the concentration camps, the shelling of civilians—have opened a new chapter in the American foreign-policy debate. The issue, generically, is a familiar one: whether the United States should use force to oppose aggression far from home. Many of the questions are also familiar. Are our own national interests at stake? Will a modest application of American arms do the job or only lead us into a quagmire? Should we turn to regional or international organizations rather than take the initiative ourselves? Can or should America be the "world's policeman"?

What is not in the least familiar, however, is the alignment of views on this particular event. The conservative camp, which was united in support of forceful prosecution of the cold war, and which, with a few exceptions, pretty solidly backed the Gulf war, is now split down the middle on American action in Bosnia. But more remarkably, liberals, whose hallmark for twenty years has been aversion to U.S. assertiveness or interventionism abroad, have spoken up overwhelmingly in favor of taking American military action against Serbia.

When Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990 confronted America with its first post-cold-war international crisis, the legacy of the preceding 25 years of debate was conspicuous: liberals were predictably dovish and conservatives were on the whole just as predictably hawkish. Bosnia has presented us with our second post-cold-war crisis, and suddenly past positions seem forgotten. This time it is hard, as they say, to tell the players without a scorecard.

The most prominent conservative advocating the use of force against Serbia has been Ronald Reagan's ambassador to the UN, Jeane Kirkpatrick. Writing in her syndicated column, she has stated unequivocally:

> Milosevic's government must not be permitted to profit from its violence. It is a savage, racist enterprise for which there is no room in any new world order worth preserving.

The Center for Security Policy, led by Frank Gaffney, another former official in the Reagan administration, has also called for strikes against Serbian targets both in Bosnia and in Serbia itself:

> The crisis in the former Yugoslavia *requires* the introduction of U.S.—and, ideally, other civilized nations'—forces on behalf of the victims of the Serbian program of territorial conquest and "ethnic cleansing." [Emphasis in original.]

A number of other conservatives, including Patrick Glynn of the American Enterprise Institute, have joined in this call, while Paul Gigot, a columnist for the *Wall Street Journal*, has also advocated force, though somewhat more hesitantly:

> Western intervention in the bloody Balkans has always been a tough call. . . . Yet if the New World Order is going to mean some sort of framework for acceptable international behavior, it's hard to see how it doesn't apply to Serbian aggression.

Anticipating other local crises requiring an American response, Gigot has argued that, as compared to the scale of Desert Storm, "A more discriminate use of force would even be a good precedent."

In its own editorials the *Journal* has hinted at the use of force without ever quite crossing the line. In July it declared:

> It may now become necessary to demonstrate to the Serbian generals that there is a considerable difference between shooting at unarmed civilians or UN blue-helmet peacekeepers and going up against well-trained, well-equipped troops supported by high-tech aircraft.

And in August:

> Air strikes at military targets around Belgrade might persuade Slobodan and his Serbian generals that their adventures can no longer be conducted without cost.

In the New York *Times*, William Safire and A.M. Rosenthal, the more conservative of the paper's

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regular columnists, have given mixed support to the use of force. Safire has called for "seizing Serbian air space, much as we have done in Kurdistan," but has not endorsed other military measures. And as Rosenthal has seen it, "America should be Europe's committed reserve for the Bosnia action," ready to "join an international action—after Europe shows its good faith by sending in planes and troops to destroy Serbian artillery bombarding Sarajevo."

ACROSS the barricades from these former comrades-in-arms, however, one of the most prominent conservative think tanks, the Heritage Foundation, issued a position paper in July entitled "U.S. and Bosnia: Too Late, Wrong War." According to this paper:

> There are no vital U.S. interests at stake in the Bosnian struggle. However great the suffering and however violent the conflict in that region may be, there is no likely outcome that would seriously threaten any significant American interests.

Still, the question-begging title (is it right to fight the wrong war on time?) hinted at Heritage's ambivalence. The famous conservative columnist George Will, on the other hand, was not in the least ambivalent. He taunted the advocates of engagement in Bosnia:

> Is catharsis a suitable reason for military action? Would limited military intervention reform Serbian behavior? The Balkans are not a promising laboratory for a therapeutic foreign policy. Must we intervene to "teach" other would-be aggressors that aggression does not pay? Desert Storm was, in part, such a tutelary policy. Serbia was evidently not paying attention.

Will sees the Bosnia issue as an instance of a larger debate between moralism and realism, and he comes down strongly against the former. He even believes that the principle of national self-determination championed by Woodrow Wilson at the conclusion of World War I led directly to Nazism and World War II. Against such moralism, Will thunders,

> Realism is a moral duty. . . . If we do not know these things, we will find ourselves in Pandaemonium . . . the name Milton gave . . . to the capital of Hell.

A surprising ally of Will's in this case has been his fellow syndicated columnist Charles Krauthammer. Though often in the past a trenchant critic of realism, Krauthammer has in this instance taken the realist tack:

> The United states has a special responsibility to deal with threats to *global* stability. Iraq confronted the world with such a threat. . . . Serbia does not. [Thus] whatever we do in Bosnia is for reasons of humanitarianism and not national interest. . . . Statesmen . . . do not have the right to launch their nations into large unfathomable military adventures, to risk not their lives but the lives of their countrymen, purely out of humanitarian feeling.

WHILE conservatives have been debating among themselves, liberals (at least those who have been heard from) have virtually been unanimous in hawkishness. Anthony Lewis of the New York *Times*, a voluble opponent of Desert Storm and just about every other U.S. intervention since Vietnam, was among the first to urge military action against Serbia. As early as April he wrote that the Serbian ruler

> has made it about as clear as anyone can . . . that he understands only one kind of language: the language of force. . . . If we can ground Saddam Hussein's helicopters, we can much more easily silence Slobodan Milosevic's guns.

In August, Lewis returned to the subject, castigating President Bush as "a veritable Neville Chamberlain in refusing to face the challenge in Yugoslavia." Then when a strong appeal by the former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher for the defense of Bosnia appeared on the *Times* op-ed page, Lewis rushed into print the next day with a ringing endorsement.

Lewis's fellow *Times* columnist and fellow liberal, Leslie Gelb, has been no less hawkish:

> Everyone concerned with the Yugoslav problem knows there is only one decent chance to stop this horror: peacemakers have to establish the only kind of credibility killers understand. They have to convince themselves, and then convince the Milosevics, that they are ready and able to use force.

Times editorials were at first more equivocal. During April and into May, the paper ran four editorials excoriating Serbian actions and urging stronger diplomatic and economic sanctions in response, but each time it stopped short of advocating force. By late May, however, it was ready to go a small step further:

> The bully who violates Bosnia's internationally recognized borders must be confronted by an international coalition prepared to do what is necessary to put him in his place. . . . Such a coalition need not undertake armed intervention, at least not yet. [But it] can declare its willingness to use greater force, as a last resort.

As events in Bosnia went from bad to worse, the *Times*'s position continued to harden, so that by July it was calling for air strikes and even suggesting intervention by ground forces operating under UN auspices. The *Times* always posed the issue in terms of multilateral military action, but it went as far as to say that "If Europeans won't stanch the [bloodshed], then America has to lead them in a joint rescue."

The Washington *Post* has been more ambivalent. In the spring, its denunciations of Serbia

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were accompanied by implicit rejections of military action, but by August it too seemed ready to countenance the use of force:

> Throughout denunciations, sanctions, and UN presence the outrage has, if anything, escalated. The practical difficulties and the politics of going further remain complicated and ambiguous, but what the Serbs are doing is not. The moral imperative to somehow stop them is overwhelming.

While the *Post*'s own voice has been somewhat convoluted, one of its liberal columnists, Richard Cohen, has spoken with directness. After news reports that the Serbs were holding Bosnians in what amounted to concentration camps, Cohen likened inaction against Serbia to America's failure to bomb the rail lines to Auschwitz. He exhorted President Bush to "galvanize the West and the United Nations to give the Serbs a swift kick to the groin." The *Post* also opened its pages to a guest column by Congressman Lee Hamilton, a prominent member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, who declared that "the crisis in Bosnia-Herzegovina and former Yugoslavia meet[s] the stern test for humanitarian intervention."

The Los Angeles *Times*, another liberal newspaper, has also come down in favor of using force. As early as May, it argued that

> Though the obstacles to such intervention may be many, it must be realized that Europe's passivity before a major neo-fascist atrocity could well exact a terrible price. . . . Where there is a will . . . there is a way. . . . [A] framework for intervention and a role for NATO could be created.

By August, the paper's exhortations to "rescu[e] the innocent from the slaughter" intensified:

> Even before the most recent, sickening reports reached the world, there was abundant cause for the relevant international bodies to consider—and urgently—military action against Serbia.

Still another liberal paper of national stature, the *Christian Science Monitor*, advocated securing UN approval

> to ground the Serbian-Yugoslav air force using mainly U.S.-NATO air power. . . . It should be made clear that, if necessary, air strikes will be considered to take out artillery in the hills above Sarajevo that can shell the airport.

Another newborn hawk spawned by Serbian aggression was *Time*'s Strobe Talbott. Talbott had uniquely interpreted Mikhail Gorbachev's perestroika as proof that "the Soviet threat . . . never was. The doves . . . were right all along." Now, insisting that "Bosnia is not Vietnam," he wrote:

> Slobodan Milosevic's regime can be isolated politically and, if necessary, defeated militarily in a way that Ho Chi Minh's could not. . . . What is needed is an all-out peacemaking effort . . . authorized by the UN but armed and manned largely by NATO and led by a U.S. that can thereby truly cure itself of the Vietnam syndrome.

(Why we would want a cure if the doves were right all along remained unexplained.)

II

To make sense out of this new alignment of positions, it is necessary first to make sense of the old.

From the time the Vietnam war heated up, liberals were doves and conservatives were hawks. Although this had not always been the case (from Truman's presidency through Kennedy's, liberals were often more assertive internationally than conservatives), during Vietnam and its aftermath the correlation became so strong that dovishness or hawkishness came to define who was liberal and who conservative. The issue was sealed, so to speak, when Senator Henry M. Jackson, who boasted the highest rating in the Senate on the scorecard of organized labor, was widely labeled a "conservative Democrat" because of his pro-military position—and when liberal hawks (myself included) abandoned their resistance to the sobriquet "neoconservative."

Three things made liberals doves and conservatives hawks. The first was a differing assessment of Communism. Conservatives loathed it, while liberals merely rejected it. Liberals may have decried the lack of freedom under Communism, but they were more willing to credit Communist claims of advances in health, literacy, or other social and economic indicators. For example, Harvard's John Kenneth Galbraith wrote in 1984: "The Russian system succeeds because, in contrast to the Western industrial economies, it makes full use of its manpower." Some liberals even saw positive things in the Communist *political* system. Thus, back in the Brezhnev era, the Sovietologist Stephen F. Cohen of Princeton criticized conservatives who "still overemphasize the coercive aspects of official Soviet policies and politics while underemphasizing consensual ones."

Conservatives saw the cold war as a titanic struggle between two models of civilization, one very good and one very bad, the "city on a hill" versus the "evil empire." Liberals decried such contrasts as "Manichean." Indeed, they were wont to stress the parallels in behavior between the two superpowers. Accordingly, Paul Warnke, George McGovern's chief defense adviser and Jimmy Carter's chief arms negotiator, likened the United States and the Soviet Union to "two apes on a treadmill," with Soviet military policies mimicking those of the United States.

The second difference was in predispositions toward the use of force. Liberal propaganda, epitomized in the movie *Dr. Strangelove*, made

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conservatives out to be warmongers. This was an egregious smear which, like many, contained just a shred of truth. In general, conservatives do take a more Hobbesian view of the inevitability of conflict between individuals and between nations; they do not welcome it, but they are anxious to be prepared for it. Liberals, on the other hand, developed the theory in the 1970's that force had lost its utility in the modern world. As Paul Warnke, this time writing in collaboration with Leslie Gelb, put it: "Perhaps the principal lesson of the past decade is that military force is a singularly inept instrument of foreign policy." And the Harvard historian Stanley Hoffmann announced "the increasingly obvious irrelevance of military power to most of the goals pursued by states."

This was not merely an empirical observation but a normative one. "Violence represent[s] failure, no matter which side prevails," wrote Meg Greenfield, the editor of the Washington *Post* editorial page: "What you must do when it is over is what you should have done long before"—namely, talk things over with your adversaries. Even more tellingly, President Carter's Secretary of State, Cyrus Vance, resigned to protest his government's decision to use force in attempting to rescue the American hostages in Iran.

In place of force, liberals offered various alternatives. Secretary Vance's deputy and acting successor, Warren Christopher, summed up the lessons he took from his four years in office in a monograph entitled *Diplomacy: The Neglected Imperative.* Liberals also put more stock in the efficacy of the UN and other international bodies, and where they wanted to see pressure exerted, as in the Persian Gulf, they estimated more highly than did conservatives the impact of economic sanctions.

The third difference between the two sides lay in the tension between altruism and self-interest. When the liberal, Woodrow Wilson, declared that the United States would enter World War I in order "to make the world safe for democracy," Theodore Roosevelt captured the sentiments of conservatives in retorting: "First and foremost we are to make the world safe for ourselves." Liberals have generally been more inclined to speak in terms of abstract principles and the well-being of mankind, conservatives in terms of national interest (though liberals have sometimes found it expedient to use the lingo of realism, especially in attacking the allegedly fanatical anti-Communism of the Reagan administration). Liberals have urged ratification of numerous UN human-rights conventions, while conservatives have warned of infringements of U.S. sovereignty. Other things being equal, liberals have been keener for foreign aid than conservatives. Other things were not equal, however, when the aid in question was military assistance, or when the proposed recipient was a strongly anti-Communist government or guerrilla movement. In those cases, roles were often reversed, with conservatives advocating aid while liberals opposed it.

In foreign policy, liberal altruism has expressed itself not only in support for affirmative acts of international generosity, but also in a dictum of national self-abnegation. In Central America, for example, liberals might concede that the Sandinista government was repugnant but they were loath to see Washington act against it because America would be acting in its own interest—out of a cold-war calculus—rather than (as they saw it) in the interest of the Nicaraguan people. This rule of self-abnegation also applied to the thorny question of relations with friendly dictators. While conservatives took a more tolerant view of such regimes ("our bastards," as President Kennedy called them), liberals tended to give no credit to "tin-horn dictators" (in President Carter's phrase) for their friendliness toward the United States.*

III

WHAT does the end of the cold war do to these alignments? With Communism dead in Europe, conservative divisions over Bosnia are easy to understand. True, Milosevic is an old Communist who still rules high-handedly, yet the threat he represents is not a revived Communism but a belligerent Serbian nationalism. Conservatives cannot agree among themselves whether this threat engages U.S. interests sufficiently to warrant military measures. Indeed, as was already apparent in the debate about the Persian Gulf, conservatives are far from settled on a definition of U.S. interests now that the Communist threat has disappeared. They are not averse to using force, but they are hesitant to use it for purposes that are solely altruistic.

What is hard to fathom is the apparent lack of division among liberals. One would expect that the pull of their belief in altruism would clash with their reluctance to countenance force, leaving them, too, on both sides of the issue. But I have yet to uncover a single clear liberal statement against intervention. What can explain this?

Part of the answer is undoubtedly political partisanship. Since most liberals detest George Bush, many of them will readily spot the folly in his inertia on Bosnia, all the more so since his Democratic opponent Bill Clinton has positioned himself to the hawkish side of the President on this issue. By the same token, the liberals who feel this way will be the ones most eager to vent

* Further to the Left, this attitude took on a morbidly humorous aspect: regimes were approved precisely to the degree that they were hostile to America. Thus the Institute for Policy Studies (IPS) published a paean to the Somali dictator Siad Barre when he was aligned with the Soviet Union. But when the Soviets embraced the new dictatorship that emerged in Ethiopia in the mid-1970's, Somalia felt impelled to turn to the West, leading IPS to discover that Siad was actually a reactionary.

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their views, while others, who approve of Bush's caution—and there must surely be some—will prefer to hold their tongues.

Conversely, if Bush were to launch an Operation Balkan Storm, it is impossible to imagine that no liberal voices would be raised to protest such "reckless" interventionism (the term with which, ironically, Bush's spokesman branded Clinton's position). Just as conservatives took their orientation for so long from the goal of defeating Communism, some liberals during the 1980's appeared to take theirs from the goal of defeating Reaganism. Where Bosnia is concerned, the vacuum of leadership in the White House may have made better people of such liberals. Absent U.S. policies as a focus for their animus, they see more clearly the depredations of other governments.

Partisanship, however, cannot be the whole explanation. Another element must lie in the lessons learned from Desert Storm. The large majority of liberals opposed the use of force against Saddam Hussein, marshaling all the arguments they had honed since Vietnam. The war would be difficult or impossible to win, they said. America would suffer grievous casualties. The Arab world would rise in revulsion against us. Above all, the same ends could be achieved peacefully through economic sanctions. These arguments were confuted devastatingly by the actual experience of the war and by the fact that two years of economic sanctions have still not broken Saddam's defiance, even after we smashed his country. Although few if any have confessed it publicly, some of those who were so wrong have surely rethought their views.*

An additional reason why the liberals' aversion to force has been overwhelmed in this instance by their belief in altruism is that the case is in one sense a very pure one. Where atrocities have been committed by America's enemies—by, say, Saddam Hussein or the Vietnamese Communists—opposition to those atrocities could not be disentangled from advancement of America's interests. In Bosnia, by contrast, America is not involved and has little direct stake. If we were to send our forces to oppose Serbian atrocities, there would be scant danger of aggrandizing ourselves. Hence our actions would be doubly altruistic. The very absence of tangible and immediate U.S. interests that, in the calculus of some conservatives, rules out intervention, ironically makes it all the more acceptable to some liberals.

IV

If liberals have sometimes allowed their policy prescriptions to be shaped by their domestic political animosities, conservatives can be guilty of the same thing. Today, the liberal clamor for action in Bosnia may be turning some conservatives in the opposite direction. For example, the *Wall Street Journal* editorializes:

> If Vietnam is any guide, should things start going badly, many who raise that hue and cry will quickly turn tail, transforming themselves into violent critics of any U.S. involvement.

This is the concern that has made the Pentagon the last stronghold of the Vietnam syndrome, and it is an understandable one. Anthony Lewis writes: "When Serbian gunners began lobbing shells into Dubrovnik a year ago, a few air strikes would have stopped them." But what if this had failed to stop them? Lewis himself points out that he was an early supporter of the Vietnam war who later changed his mind. Is it any wonder that soldiers are reluctant to be sent into battle by the likes of him?

But to allow such a consideration to shape our policy is to abdicate responsibility. Weighty matters are at stake in the Bosnian crisis. The first is humanitarian. Serbian forces are waging a war against civilians.† Contemptuous of the laws of war, they are targeting hospitals, old-age homes, and bread lines. The number of dead already is probably in five figures and may increase manyfold as winter sets in. Many have been maimed, and still more have lost their homes. Then there are the camps. Although the facts are still murky, it is apparent that prisoners have been starved, beaten, and killed. This is not Auschwitz; it is more like the camps where the Japanese held American POW's in the Pacific, which is bad enough.

Some maintain that the Convention on Genocide is being violated. It is doubtful, however, that Serbian actions fulfill the convention's definition, which rests on an "intent to destroy" a people. The Serbs are killing Muslims wantonly, but their intent is less to destroy them than to drive them out so as to take their land. Still, Bosnia is, even if in a minimal sense, a nation, and Serbia is trying to wipe it off the map. If not genocide, this is still a terrible crime.

Charles Krauthammer argues in principle against humanitarian military interventions: "To sacrifice an American life for a Bosnian life is commendable—but only if that life is yours." But bombing the rail lines to Auschwitz might have cost some fliers their lives; does that justify the decision not to do it? At some extreme point, humanitarian abuses in themselves do warrant intervention. Whether things have reached that point in Bosnia is a question we have to answer if no other American interests are engaged. But is

* One exception was the *Times*'s Leslie Gelb, who hastened to acknowledge errors, but had little to confess, since on the main issue, the need to confront Iraqi aggression with force, he was one of the few liberals who had been right.

† Bosnian forces have also attacked Serbian civilians, but by most accounts these episodes have been infrequent and evidently retaliatory.

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it true that no other American interests are engaged?

An isolationist case can be made that with the demise of the Soviet Union no force on earth can threaten America. Our national security—that is, the integrity of our borders and our political independence—cannot be compromised by any conceivable event in the Balkans, or anywhere else in Europe. In this view, we should continue commercial relations but withdraw from political or military involvement overseas. Adverse developments might impinge on our trade, but that would only cost us money, not lives.

This is a coherent argument, but it fails on several grounds. We are sufficiently dependent on commerce so that to opt out of world politics would make our economy hostage to fate. Further, should America abdicate, the havoc that would ensue outside our borders would break our hearts. This in turn might impel us to reengage, only then at a much higher cost. On the other hand, if we remained aloof, a power might eventually emerge commanding sufficient scientific and industrial resources to end our physical invulnerability.

Thus, even without any clear and present danger on our horizon, we have an interest in preserving peace, encouraging humane order, and preventing the emergence of a hostile imperium.

THIS is not to say that our interests are engaged everywhere to an equal extent. But however we measure those interests, Bosnia counts. If we measure them geographically, Europe is of the first importance, and the aggression in Bosnia threatens the stability of Europe. Unimpeded, the Serbs are almost sure to apply "ethnic cleansing" to Kosovo, a land 90-percent Albanian. This would be a still fiercer task than the one they have undertaken in Bosnia, and would almost certainly lead to fighting with Albania and might cross the threshold beyond which Turkey would feel drawn to the defense of fellow Muslims. The Serbs might also go after Macedonia and try to "cleanse" Vojvodina, which could kindle conflict with Bulgaria or Hungary. Greece could find its security affected either by events in Macedonia or by Turkish involvement.

In the eastern part of the continent, ethnic and national quarrels are simmering in Moldova, Georgia, Azerbaijan, the Baltics, and elsewhere. If Milosevic goes unchecked, there will be many other Milosevics to bring these pots to full boil. Even the western part of the continent may be destabilized. The fighting in Bosnia has already generated two million refugees, and if the fighting spreads, there will be still more. Already Germany, Austria, Italy, and Hungary have begun to impose new restrictions. In Germany, dark forces have been stirred by the flood of refugees, and violent or extremist groups are also growing in France, England, Italy, and elsewhere.

If we measure our interests in terms of discouraging the emergence of forces hostile to America, then the Islamic world, like Europe, is of first importance. Not that its own response to the Bosnian crisis has been admirable. While reports were emerging from Bosnia of Muslims murdered and abused solely for being Muslims, the Islamic Conference devoted first priority at its June meeting to denouncing human-rights violations by . . . Israel, of course. Still, the most responsible and pro-American powers in the Muslim world, Turkey and Egypt, have scaled back their cooperation with Washington on Iraq to express their displeasure and embarrassment over its inaction in Bosnia.

The responsible Muslim states are not the only ones getting involved. Iran has taken the lead in pressing the issue in the Islamic Conference, and it has also begun to send some volunteers and weapons to Bosnia. Bosnia is not Iraq, but explain that to the man in the street anywhere in the Islamic world. The contrast between Desert Storm and Balkan inaction will make plenty of grist for those who preach that the West and the "great Satan" are inherently enemies of Islam. Conversely, if we rescue Bosnia, much wind will be taken out of their sails.

If we measure our interests in terms of upholding basic principles of world order, then Article 2.4 of the United Nations Charter outlawing "the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state" is also of first importance. In the cold war, mutual fear prevented much aggression, but each superpower was relatively free to commit aggression within its own sphere of influence (although this freedom was not equally abused). The end of the cold war could mean a lessening of constraints, but a unipolar world could also make it possible for America to lead in enforcing the ban on aggression. That is exactly what George Bush seemed to mean when he invoked a "new world order" in response to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.

Opponents of action in Bosnia often say that America cannot right every wrong, which is true, and they ask why we should intervene in Bosnia sooner than Somalia, the Sudan, Moldova, or Georgia. One good answer is that we recognized Bosnia as a state, and it was admitted to the UN. The fighting in Bosnia, therefore, unlike the situation in these other places, is a matter of cross-border aggression. Compassion should lead us to do what we can to alleviate suffering wherever we can, but since we must draw some lines among different degrees of American involvement, one good place to draw them is on the principle of opposing aggression.

BUT if important American interests are at stake, do we have the capacity to act effectively in Bosnia? Bosnia is a much tougher nut than Iraq, we are told. But when we

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were debating action in the Gulf in 1990, a parade of experts told us how tough a nut Iraq was, and warned of the costs of engaging Saddam's forces. Balkan terrain, we now hear, is more daunting militarily than that of the Gulf, and so it is. But, on the other hand, the Iraqi army numbered one million with modern arms; the Serbian forces number in the tens of thousands, with older equipment. In January 1991, *Newsweek*'s military expert, a retired colonel named David Hackworth, predicted American casualties of "200 dead an hour in the opening round" against Iraq. (In the event, 100 died in the whole war.) Today, this same expert assures us that

> Yugoslavia is an impossible mission. . . . Yugoslavian soldiers, irregular or regular, are the meanest mothers in the valley of death and the last tigers the United States ever wants to try to tame.

The military prowess of the Serbs has been widely recollected of late, with dramatic accounts of how Serbian guerrillas pinned down dozens of German divisions in World War II. But the historian Norman Stone reported in the London *Times* that he had checked with the German Military-Historical Research Office and learned that the actual number of German divisions was six, of which two were manned by Croats, and only one was front-line.

Yet however valiantly the Serbs may have fought to resist Hitler's occupation, there is no reason to assume that they would fight with the same élan for the cause of despoiling the Bosnians. In fact, a number of press and diplomatic reports suggest that the Serbian forces in Bosnia are little more than gangs of bullies. They "are ill-disciplined, largely a ragtag group of young people without opposition," says George Kenney, who resigned his State Department post coordinating U.S. policy for the area to protest our inaction. And the New York *Times* quoted a Pentagon analyst who described these forces as "loath to take casualties" and having "neither the stomach nor training" for close combat.

In any event, the Yugoslav Partisans in World War II were not all Serbs. Some were even Bosnians. This suggests that U.S. intervention in Bosnia need not mean the introduction of ground forces. Rather, we could begin by arming the Bosnians. We could also help them by grounding Serbian aircraft and by striking Serbian guns, communications, and military assets from the air.

Would this work? Well, the Serbs gave up when they met resistance in Slovenia, and in Croatia they settled for what they had already grabbed once a local resistance got organized. Supporting Bosnia would not get us into a quagmire; it would more likely convince the Serbs to back down.

Should we wait for Europe to lead, as A.M. Rosenthal suggests, or for UN action? If we do, we will wait forever. Left to their own devices, Europe will not lead and the UN will not act. (The one concrete measure the UN has taken following European leadership in this crisis was the imposition of the absurdly unjust arms embargo on all parties in Yugoslavia, the effect of which was to disarm the victims without hampering the aggressors.) We should seek UN authorization in whatever form we can get it, and we should seek the collaboration of as many European and other allied states as we can muster (we know that some will go along). But nothing useful will happen without American leadership.

It is quite true that Bosnia is above all a European problem, but European actions since Yugoslavia began to unravel testify eloquently to the sad fact that Europe is not ready to take care of itself. The Heritage Foundation maintains that this is the result of its "long dependency on the U.S." The implication is that if it is forced to be independent, Europe will rise to the occasion. But throughout this century, Europe has shown no aptitude for self-preservation in the absence of American help. On its own, it spawned Nazism, Communism, and two world wars. If post-Soviet Europe is ever to achieve political maturity, this is more likely to happen if we lead it by the hand than if we push it from the nest.

V

The Bosnia crisis has shattered the mold. With the end of the cold war, we will all find new allies and adversaries in our debates on foreign policy. As we sally forth into this uncharted world, what guidance can we derive from the old debates? After the fall of Communism, what can we conclude about the issues that have divided doves and hawks over the last quarter-century?

We have learned from the people who lived under it that Communism was every bit as evil as its strongest opponents claimed. The struggle between Communism and democracy really was Manichean. This should remind us to place high priority on bringing down those Communist regimes that remain, bearing in mind that three times as many people are still living under Communism in Asia as ever lived under it in Europe. It should also teach us to value the American experiment more highly than some liberals have been wont to do. We should, as Jeane Kirkpatrick has said, face the truth about ourselves no matter how pleasant it may be. And we should never forget that democracy is a great good which we should do our best to advance wherever we can.

We have also learned that the old debate about the use of force was largely a fraud. The basic guidelines about using force should never have been hard to puzzle out. Violence is always a grave undertaking and always should be a last resort—not that every other option can be tried first, but they should all be considered first. But

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when the violence of others needs to be resisted there is rarely any alternative means. Economic sanctions will stop few aggressors; diplomacy fewer still. Diplomacy is nothing more than the act of communication between governments. It is essential, perhaps, but of no weight in itself. One may need a telephone to call the police, but the telephone is hardly a substitute for the police. The reason that Milosevic does not take his hands off Bosnia and that Saddam would not leave Kuwait is not that we failed to inform them that this was our wish.

The elevation of diplomacy to a "neglected imperative" flowed from the idea that the cold war was in some sense the fruit of misunderstanding. But what has been confirmed since the Soviet collapse is that we feared Soviet intentions because we understood them only too well, and that those who placed the greatest emphasis on military deterrence understood them best. The allegation that American hawks in some sense relished the use of force—implicit in the oft-repeated charge that Reagan saw it as a "first resort"—was a calumny.

Liberals who advocate the use of force in Bosnia should absorb the lesson that America must remain well-armed. The Persian Gulf yesterday, the Balkans today, who knows where our consciences will be seared or our interests compromised tomorrow? If we are to use force for reasons that are even in part altruistic, we must be all the more abstemious with American lives. This means we must have the most sophisticated, "gold-plated," "redundant" arms that our engineers can dream up. We cannot eviscerate the defense budget one day and send America to the rescue the next.

As for the clash between altruism and self-interest, the cold war holds fewer lessons, and the argument will go on. For my part, I lean toward a policy encompassing a large measure of altruism. It is true that the moral rules for states cannot be identical to those for individuals, but when we act collectively as a nation we are not excused from all moral considerations. Our duties to people in other countries are less compelling than our duties to our fellow citizens, just as our duties to the latter are less urgent than those to our families and dependents. But that does not mean they are nil. And as technology brings other countries closer, our own fate is increasingly entwined with theirs.

It is folly, however, to believe that altruism requires national self-abnegation, that America needs, as Stanley Hoffmann once put it, to "curb" its "aggressive nationalism" in the interests of world order. On the contrary, the only hope for world order lies in American assertiveness. Twice now—in 1945 with its nuclear monopoly and in 1991 with the disappearance of the rival superpower—America has found itself reigning supreme. But even when we enjoyed a nuclear monopoly, there was no danger from America of what Senator J. William Fulbright later called an "arrogance of power." Nor is there any such danger now. Rather the danger, as the poor Bosnians could tell us, comes from the opposite direction: from an American abdication of power.

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Columbus & the Jews

Jonathan D. Sarna

A CENTURY ago, on October 12, 1892, the 400th anniversary of Christopher Columbus's landing in the New World was celebrated with great fanfare all across the United States. New York, where the most memorable commemoration took place, staged a five-day citywide extravaganza that drew a million visitors and filled the streets with parades, festivals, and tributes. On Columbus Day itself, businesses closed down and an 84-foot monument of the great explorer was added to Central Park.*

Jews participated actively in the 1892 gala. On the Sabbath that marked the beginning of the festivities in New York, special services were held in the major synagogues and temples. The city's chief rabbi, Jacob Joseph, published a special prayer for the occasion, its flowery Hebrew text expressing gratitude to God not only for Columbus, "the first man in the New World," but also for the two Jews who, according to the prayer, had accompanied him on his voyage. The prayer also paid tribute to America's subsequent role as a refuge for persecuted Jews, highlighted the nation's traditions of religious freedom and equality, praised George Washington, and closed with a blessing for President Benjamin Harrison and his government.

The chief rabbi's prayer, which was printed in both Hebrew and English translation in the New York *Herald*, embodied three themes that would prove central to American Jewish thinking about Columbus. First, by pointing to the Jews who supposedly traveled with him, the prayer served to legitimate the Jewish presence in the New World. Second, it associated Columbus with the freedoms that were so centrally important to American Jews. Finally, the prayer used Columbus as a vehicle for expressing Jewish patriotism, as well as allegiance to the values America stood for.

Actually, the most significant American Jewish contribution to the national celebration of 1892 received only modest recognition at the time—although in the years ahead it would be remembered while everything else was forgotten. This was the scholarly research of Rabbi Meyer (Moritz) Kayserling, written up in several articles in 1892 and then two years later as a book. Kayserling (1829-1905), the rabbi of Budapest, had studied with the great German historian Leopold Ranke and had written prolifically in many areas of Jewish history, specializing in Spanish and Portuguese Jewry and the Marranos. In 1891, he was commissioned by the American Jewish merchant Lazarus Straus and his diplomat son Oscar Solomon Straus to prepare a scholarly volume demonstrating the extent to which Jews shared in Columbus's enterprise. The result was *Christopher Columbus and the Participation of the Jews in the Spanish and Portuguese Discoveries.*

Oscar Straus's interest in demonstrating the compatibility of Americanism and Judaism was of long standing; he himself had published a volume in 1885 that purported to show "the influence of the Hebrew Commonwealth upon the Origin of Republican Government in the United States." His argument, drawing heavily on Puritan sources, was the by-now familiar one that (in a phrase attributed to the British historian W.E.H. Lecky) "Hebrew mortar cemented the foundations of American democracy." Something of the same spiritual quest seems to have sparked Straus's interest in making known the participation of Jews in Columbus's discovery.

The Great Mariner had evolved in the American mind into the embodiment of the national ideal, a symbol of American achievement, progress, and goodness. By associating themselves with him, Jews would symbolically take on these same virtues, yoking together their Americanism and their Judaism and demonstrating the historical indispensability of Jews to the American enterprise. More immediately, Straus believed, as he admitted in a private letter to Kayserling, that if it could be historically proved that Jews had taken an active part in the discovery of America, "this fact would be an answer for all time to come to anti-Semitic tendencies in this country."

This last was a most remarkable and revealing assumption. Although they rarely spoke of the problem in public, domestic anti-Semitism was already of substantial concern to American Jewish leaders. Conditions had been deteriorating

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* America's embrace of Columbus is described in a new book by Claudia L. Bushman, *America Discovers Columbus* (University Press of New England).

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for American Jews since the 1870's, and the Straus family had itself been the victim of social discrimination. In one memorable incident, several members of the family were refused admission by a hotel in Lakewood, N.J.; in response, Oscar's brother, Nathan Straus (the owner of the R.H. Macy department store), purchased land nearby and built a hotel which he opened to Jews and Gentiles alike. These sorts of personal encounters likely underlay Straus's strenuous lifelong efforts to polish the image of American Jews so that they might be better respected.

Beyond this, the letter to Kayserling reveals a common 19th-century belief that through their own positive actions, and especially by spreading correct information about themselves, American Jews could stamp out anti-Semitism. If only the record could be set straight, Straus and many of his generation believed, prejudice against Jews would disappear. All that Jewish scholars like Kayserling had to do was come up with the right facts, and publicize them.

Kayserling certainly fulfilled his part of the bargain. His well-documented study explored a hitherto-unknown web of ties between Columbus and Jews or recent forced converts from Judaism (*conversos*), stretching from those who supplied him with maps, astronomical tables, and nautical instruments, to those who championed his cause before the Spanish crown, to those who, like the convert Luis de Santangel, actually supported Columbus's journey financially. The volume also listed four men "of Jewish stock" as having accompanied Columbus to the New World (actually, only one of them—the interpreter Luis de Torres, who had converted to Christianity not long before—was of certain Jewish descent).

Most important of all, Kayserling showed that Columbus's reward was paid out of funds expropriated from Jews being expelled from Spain in 1492, and that the same source—not the Queen's jewels, as popular myth had it, but her Jews—would defray the costs of his second voyage as well. Finally, Kayserling traced the spread of *conversos* to the New World, the persecutions they faced at the hands of the Inquisition, and the (inevitable) happy end: "The New World . . . was not merely a land rich in gold and silver mines, but also the land where the light of freedom first shone upon the adherents of Judaism."

Kayserling's book was published in German, English, and Hebrew, and its conclusions attracted wide notice. While his researches had no discernible effect on the incidence of American anti-Semitism, they did influence most subsequent biographers of Columbus.

Naturally the book earned its warmest reception in Jewish circles. Thus, during the 1905 celebrations of the 250th anniversary of Jewish settlement in the United States it was cited repeatedly to prove that "the Jew has played an honorable and not undistinguished part in the history and development of the Western continent," and that "we, whose ancestors bore their share in the mission of Columbus, . . . may well reckon ourselves as the first of Americans, bone of the bone and flesh of the flesh of Columbia."

According to the scholar Joseph Jacobs (writing in 1910), the significance of Kayserling's book could "scarcely be overrated," suggesting as it did "the existence of a Jewish element in America from its very originings [*sic*]." On Columbus Day 1918, Rabbi Joseph Stolz of Chicago cited Kayserling yet again: "Even though there was a time when . . . Palestine harbored no Hebrews, there never was a time when white people were on American soil in anticipation of the Jews."

In short, Kayserling's research validated the sense of American Jews that they had sunk deep roots in the country and had contributed mightily to its growth and welfare. In an era when most American Jews were newcomers, and when even those born in America felt threatened both by anti-Semitism and by restrictions on further Jewish immigration, this reading of the nation's past could not have been more welcome.

2.

NOTHING in Meyer Kayserling's book so much as hinted at the idea that Columbus himself might have been a Jew. To the contrary, Kayserling criticized Columbus for his religious fanaticism and for his *lack* of sympathy toward Jews who were, after all, being expelled from Spain at the very moment he was setting out to sea. Nor, so far as I can tell, did anyone else in 1892 suggest that Columbus was anything other than what he claimed to be—namely, a religious Catholic and a native of Genoa.

The idea that Columbus was a Jew arose instead in non-Jewish circles in Spain. The man who first promoted it was an aristocratic scholar named Don Garcia de la Riega, and his evidence consisted of documents (now believed to have been largely forged) which he claimed to have found in Pontevedra in Galicia. These contained the names of members of the Colón family, whom he associated with Columbus, and of the Fonterossa family, whom he associated with Columbus's wife and whose ancestors turned out to be Jewish. From these rather meager shards, de la Riega fashioned a highly original theory purporting to solve the many mysteries connected with Columbus's name, background, and life by arguing that Columbus was really a secret Jew who had been born in Spain, not Genoa, and who had spent a lifetime concealing his identity.

De la Riega's theory had important political implications, for if he was correct, Spain and not Italy could claim the honor of having Columbus as a native son. Perhaps, too, there was some hope that the "discovery" might lead to an improvement in Spanish-American relations, damaged lately in the Spanish-American War. Whatever the case, Hispanophiles rushed to spread the good

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news that Columbus was in fact a Spaniard by birth.

The theory that Columbus was not only a Spaniard but a closet Jew peaked during the 1930's, an era when (perhaps only coincidentally) the "Jewish question" was very much on the public mind. A whole range of proofs was put forward, a few based on written evidence, most totally circumstantial, and some unabashedly racial. While it is impossible to review all of the evidence here, it breaks down as follows:

First, there was the issue of Columbus's name, or names. "Colón" was a name held by many Jewish families, and among Italian Jews (as the historian Cecil Roth pointed out) the shift back and forth from "Colón" to "Colombo"—a shift Columbus himself seems to have made several times—was "not only possible but invariable." Yet there were also non-Jews by these names both in Spain and in Italy, so this evidence alone could not be considered conclusive.

Second, Columbus employed a most unusual, mystical signature, in the form of a triangle:

.S.
.S. A .S.
X M Y
Xpo FERENS

According to the American Jewish numismatist and antiquarian, Maurice David, these letters decoded into "an abbreviation of the 'last confession' of the Jews and also a substitute for the Kaddish." This claim has been widely (and properly) dismissed as utterly unverifiable, but the encoded signature has heightened the aura of mystery surrounding Columbus and helps to explain why the theory of his *converso* origins continues to elicit support today.

Third, Columbus placed a cryptic monogram at the top left corner of most of his intimate letters. Could this be, as Maurice David suggested, "nothing more nor less than an old Hebrew greeting," an abbreviation of *baruch hashem*, blessed be the Lord? Many readers (myself among them) cannot see it, but once again the mystery cries out for explanation.

Fourth, Columbus's written prose sets a considerable puzzle: if the explorer was born in Genoa, why was his Italian so poor and his Castilian so good? Salvador de Madariaga, the great Spanish biographer of Columbus and perhaps the most important proponent of the theory that he was of Jewish descent, hypothesized that Columbus's parents were Spanish Jews who had departed for Genoa in the face of persecution and then "remained faithful to the language of their country of origin." More recent studies, however, propose an alternative hypothesis: that Columbus learned his Spanish in Portugal where he was married, and that his poor Italian may be explained by the fact that in Genoa, Italian was then only a literary language, whereas Columbus would have spoken the local dialect.

Fifth, there is a small bundle of purely circumstantial evidence. *Item*: like many Spanish *conversos*, Columbus and his family were highly secretive and took great pains to conceal their background—suggesting that they had something to hide. *Item*: the family's occupation, weaving, was frequently associated with Jews. *Item*: Columbus himself fraternized with Jews, had some knowledge of Jewish mystical sources, occasionally linked his experiences to events in ancient Jewish history, and even left a small legacy to a Jew.

Yet none of this by itself proves anything, and some of it may be better explained by the explorer's apocalyptic view of history and particularly by his sense of himself as a divine messenger, the Christbearer (Christopher) of a new age. It may even be that he envisaged an important role for Jews in God's divine plan and so both embraced the remnants of Israel and sought to convert them. But this too is speculative.

I HAVE left until last the so-called "racial" proofs of Columbus's Jewishness, for they stand in a class by themselves. Here, for example, is Jacob Wasserman in his biography, *Columbus: Don Quixote of the Seas*:

> A certain soft-heartedness in Columbus is a Jewish trait, in the best and the worst sense of that adjective: Jewish, too, is his unmistakable inclination to find a sentimental solution for practical problems: Jewish, likewise, is his characteristic timidity in the face of far-reaching responsibilities—a timidity that springs from age-long fear of the irrevocable and of what has been decided from above. But what is *not* Jewish is his striking want of intelligence and practical capacity, and above all, that form of Don-Quixotry that consists in subjecting the mind to the dream of a perverted reality—a trait completely foreign to the Jewish character.

The eminent Spanish historian, Salvador de Madariaga, went even farther—indeed, alarmingly so. Noting, for example, that Columbus evinced a keen attraction for gems and gold, he writes:

> The Jews have always experienced a curious fascination for gold and precious stones, forms of nature which, quite apart from their commercial value, are in deep harmony with the soul of Israel.

Madariaga also found evidence of Columbus's Jewishness in his "contractual sense, that attitude which sees every event in life as a transaction and expects and demands a definite *quid* for every *quo*." Of Columbus's illicit relationship with Beatrice Enriquez, the mother of his illegitimate child and, in Madariaga's view, herself a secret Jew, the historian has this to say:

> The sexual morality of the Jews was of course different from that of the Christians . . . in those days a Christian young woman who gave

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> herself without marriage was almost certainly a good-for-nothing, [whereas] a Jewish girl who gave herself without marriage might very possibly be a thoroughly decent soul.

Now, Wasserman was an identifying Jew and Madariaga was something of a philo-Semite, yet they—and many others who have labeled Columbus a Jew—consciously or unconsciously promote the myth that Jews differ radically in their personal characteristics, their values, and their mores from those among whom they live, and that they are unable, no matter how hard they try, fully to conceal their origins. The thinly veiled message here is one, ironically, that anti-Semites have propounded for centuries: that no matter what loyalties a Jew may proclaim, and regardless of whether (like Columbus) he publicly and privately professes his devotion to the Church, he remains both at heart and in behavior a child of Israel. Many an innocent Spaniard was targeted by the Inquisition on precisely these grounds.

It is, moreover, but one small step from this fantasy of an inherent Jewishness to an even more dangerous corollary: that Jews, operating illicitly and sometimes under the guise of another faith, are engaged in a gigantic conspiracy for their own benefit. Simon Wiesenthal, the great Nazi-hunter whose familiarity with anti-Semitic canards is beyond question, has unfortunately fallen into this very trap in his version of the Columbus story, *Sails of Hope*. According to Wiesenthal, Columbus embarked on his first voyage westward for a secret purpose: to discover the lands settled and ruled by the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel so that they might serve as a refuge for Jews being expelled from Spain. (That the American Indians were themselves the descendants of the Lost Ten Tribes was once a staple myth not only among Jews but among many Christians as well.)

On the surface this theory seems to clear up several mysteries: why Columbus maintained so many Jewish contacts, why Jews and *conversos* supported his enterprise financially, and why he brought along a Hebrew-speaking interpreter. Like all conspiracy theories, however, it ignores both simpler alternative explanations and a mass of inconvenient evidence, including, in this case, the explorer's own writings that detail his materialistic and millenarian hopes as well as his obvious intention to exploit his discoveries for the benefit of Spain.

In addition, the Wiesenthal theory requires an immense leap of faith, since there is no evidence from any source that Spanish Jews wanted to secure a refuge with the Lost Ten Tribes in "Asia"; it was far easier to go underground or to move to Portugal or Turkey. All that Wiesenthal does, in the end, is to encourage an idea that in other circumstances he would be the first to refute: the idea that Jews are disloyal, conniving, and, notwithstanding any patriotic claims they might make, out only to help their own.

To their credit, most Jewish scholars have greeted the theory of Columbus's Jewish origins with considerable skepticism. One important exception, however, was the late Cecil Roth. Influenced both by Madariaga and by his own study of the Marranos, Roth defended the theory of Columbus's Jewish origins and even hinted that he could identify his real Jewish name.

Yet once the Harvard historian Samuel Eliot Morison, in his magisterial 1942 biography of Columbus, derided the idea mercilessly, its last vestiges of scholarly support crumbled. Even Roth, in an article written just before his death in 1970, came close to retracting:

> The mystery regarding Columbus's origins is largely the outcome of his own mendacity, and as a result it is equally impossible to exclude or to confirm the hypothesis that he was descended from a Jewish or ex-Jewish family.

As for the major Jewish encyclopedias and the surveys of American Jewish history, none accepts the claim of Jewish origins at face value.

3.

This year, the 500th anniversary of Columbus's voyage, has, naturally, led to a flurry of new articles on the question of his Jewishness, but with a revealing contemporary twist. Thus, in "Was the Discoverer of America Jewish?," a writer in *Moment* magazine reminds his readers that Columbus's discovery was "disastrous" for the native American population, leading to millions of deaths, and that, in addition, the explorer introduced into the New World the scourge of slavery. "Do we really want to claim Columbus?," *Moment*'s editors ask. And Judith Laikin Elkin, writing in *Hadassah*, has made a similar point:

> The search for Jewish ancestry for Columbus is particularly untimely now, when Native Americans are drawing our attention to the genocide that paved the way for the creation of our New World.

To the question, "Columbus: Was He or Wasn't He?," she responds: "Who cares?"

There is, however, at least one good reason to care about the century-long obsession with Columbus's putative Jewish past and his indubitable Jewish associations, and that is for whatever clues it may provide to the way American Jews think about themselves. For it is a remarkable fact that among America's ethnic and religious groups only one, the Jews, has linked itself to so many of the nation's founding myths. These myths—the Indians were the Lost Ten Tribes; the Puritans were "Hebraic" to the core; Columbus was aided by Jews and may even have been one himself—have precious little to do with the real history and significance of the Indians, the Puritans, or Columbus. But they do speak volumes about American Jews, their loyalties, and their insecurities.

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Is Cuba Next?

Mark Falcoff

SINCE the collapse of Communist power in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, Fidel Castro's Cuba has entered into the deepest crisis of its history. Deprived of subsidized oil and foodstuffs from the former Eastern bloc, and no longer able to sell its sugar at above-market prices, the island is approaching economic free fall. As the New York *Times* reported earlier this year, "even common goods like soap, rum, and cooking oil have become rare luxuries." Rations of meat and other sources of protein have been cut repeatedly. And Cubans are now forced to wait in line for virtually all consumer goods, the supply and variety of which—again, to quote the *Times*—"never rich, have become scanty."

Nonetheless, Castro's grip on power seems unshaken—and by all appearances unshakable. He has even felt safe enough these last two years to leave the island in the hands of subordinates and journey abroad—to Venezuela, to Brazil, to Mexico (twice), most recently to attend the summit of Latin American presidents in Madrid. The Cuban dictator's apparent capacity to insulate himself politically from the effects of economic failure—a capacity which former colleagues of the erstwhile Soviet empire might well envy—raises some important questions about the nature of his regime, the true extent of its popularity, and the viability of any reasonable alternative.

These issues do not concern Cubans alone. The collapse of the Soviet system threatens to turn Western advocates of Marxism into ideological orphans. For even if things are not going particularly well these days in Russia or Ukraine, Poland or Romania, it is nonetheless unlikely that Communism will ever reemerge in those countries as a concrete political option. Soviet-style regimes have managed to survive thus far in Albania, Vietnam, and North Korea, but few would suggest they enjoy a deep-rooted political or historical legitimacy.

Something—one cannot be quite sure what it is—makes Cuba different. Perhaps it is the fact that, alone among surviving Communist regimes, the one in Havana has succeeded in appropriating the language, symbols, and sensibility of the *Western* revolutionary ethos (the people in arms; anticolonialism; the quest for social and economic equality). Or possibly it is the red-hot intensity of Castro's anti-Americanism. Or perhaps it is nothing more than the sheer longevity of the regime: if, the reasoning might go, it has endured all these storms and tribulations, it *must* have some important hidden strengths.

Can it be possible—as recent books and articles half-suggest—that Communism has "succeeded" in Cuba even though it has failed everywhere else? If so, what does Castro's survival mean in terms of the broader political values which have inspired movements toward freedom throughout the world? Are there special rules and needs for poor, agrarian countries that supersede (or cancel out) the aspirations of people in more advanced societies? These are questions implicit in the ongoing debate over Cuba's future—a debate which is coming to resemble something like the final engagement of the cold war, fought on the field of ideology or what remains of it.

THE survival of Communism in Cuba is—let us say it right away—due in largest measure to repression pure and simple. This is a point with which by now almost nobody abroad—not even many people who have spent a lifetime on the Left—would take issue. Cuba is a police state *par excellence*, complete with block committees, electronic surveillance, and "rapid-response brigades" deployed to intimidate those with "political and ideological problems." Its jails and psychiatric hospitals are bursting with prisoners. Cuban treatment of dissidents is harsh; those who speak out lose their jobs, their ration cards, and eventually their freedom.

Nor is this all: local block committees stage "acts of repudiation" intended to intimidate by example. These are mob actions reminiscent of Nazi Germany, in which hapless citizens are invited to discharge their frustrations and anxieties on a nonconforming neighbor. Most recently, María Elena Cruz Varela, a prizewinning poet and founder of the dissident group *Criterio Alternativo*, was forced literally to eat her own verses before an angry throng which had invaded her shabby apartment in Havana.

Paradoxically, economic failure has in some

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ways strengthened rather than weakened the regime by empowering it with some uniquely repressive tools. Rationing of increasingly scarce goods and services has proved an excellent instrument to force most Cubans to become *integrados*—that is, obedient, compliant citizens of the socialist state. This may explain, also, why American visitors tend to meet so many Cubans who mouth the formulas of the regime without much (apparent) coaching.

The success of the Cuban repression owes much to geography. Surrounded by sometimes shark-infested waters, the island itself is not an easy place to escape. Most of those who have managed to flee in recent years have either stowed away on foreign carriers, braved enormous risks on balsa-wood rafts, or been well-placed enough in the regime to have access to airplanes or helicopters. At the same time, the relative proximity of the United States (and its willingness to receive defectors with open arms) has encouraged more than one million Cubans to depart the island rather than to remain and confront Fidel Castro.

While the United States has benefited enormously from the presence of these refugees, it has also, by providing a haven for dissidents who might have given Castro a great deal of trouble, propped up the very system which its other policies are intended to undermine. Castro has implicitly recognized this fact by lowering drastically the age at which qualified Cubans are allowed to emigrate. Cuban officials have even spoken privately of permitting several thousand, perhaps even several hundred thousand, to leave if internal pressures become unmanageable.

And yet, and yet. . . . No regime can possibly survive on repression alone. There are never enough jails or policemen. In Cuba as elsewhere in the nondemocratic world, there are—there must be—a certain number of people who support the regime. In a new, groundbreaking book on Cuba, Andrés Oppenheimer of the Miami *Herald* has shed much light on this subject.*

Of the 3.5 million people active in Cuba's workforce, Oppenheimer finds, the island's national census office classifies 1.1 million as holding "unproductive" jobs. Some of these are predictable bureaucratic preferments—in the police and the armed forces, or in the offices of the party and state. But others sound as if they had been created by our own National Welfare Rights Organization in close consultation with the National Endowment for the Arts. Thus, Oppenheimer reports that thousands of people have been pensioned off to remain at home "researching topics such as 15th-century French classical music or ancient Chinese poetry—without even the prospect of having their work published." His *pièce de résistance*, a musician who plays in the Havana Psychiatric Hospital Orchestra, told him that

> Many of us would like to start our own bands, play our own music, make our own money, and stop playing for the crazies. But others in the orchestra, especially the older ones, are terrified by the idea of change. They're perfectly content to receive a monthly check for what we do. They wouldn't mind if Fidel stayed in power forever.

Then, too, as in any other country which has undergone a violent political upheaval, in Cuba there is a new class of people who owe everything they are and everything they have to the Castro regime. Most conspicuously, these include university graduates of peasant origins; or the elderly who subsist on pensions, however modest; or professional women who have gained a measure of independence undreamed-of by their mothers and grandmothers. Cuba's black community, which is difficult to estimate in number since the national census office does not sort out the population by race, but which cannot be less than 40 percent, is said to fear the return of "white" Cuba (represented by the Miami emigration, most of it descended from Spaniards), and with it segregated beaches, restaurants, and other public facilities. There are also those living in houses expropriated from owners who have fled to Miami, Caracas, Madrid, or elsewhere, and who are said to dread the return of these owners. And there may even be some who really believe the government when it claims that the United States wants to occupy the island and reduce its population to wage slavery, humiliation, and a nightmare of oppression and revenge.

Visitors to Cuba who have spoken to such people have noticed, however, a significant change in tone. Formerly their support for the regime seemed more spontaneous; today it appears forced, inspired more than anything else by fear of the unknown. They are still firmly in Castro's camp. But there may not be enough of them to save the regime if Cuba suddenly lurches into a politico-military crisis.

The Cuban regime enjoys, we are often told, a measure of legitimacy at least partly because it came to power on its own steam rather than on the bayonets of the Red Army. (The same argument, one cannot forbear mentioning, was habitually invoked until quite recently in the case of Yugoslavia.) Certainly Castro never wished to be a Soviet puppet, however much he was periodically forced to knuckle under to Moscow's pressures, or to do its dirty work in some of the more uncongenial precincts of the third world. He has always seen himself as a Cuban nationalist, and in a uniquely perverted way he was probably right to do so. On one crucial point he has succeeded where all his prede-

* *Castro's Final Hour: The Secret Story Behind the Coming Downfall of Communist Cuba.* Simon & Schuster, 461 pp., $25.00.

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cessors failed: that is, he has ended U.S. control of the Cuban economy, and removed Cuban politics, culture, and public life from American influence. Whether the economic and political deficits of his rule can be canceled out by this accomplishment is another question.

No doubt there is—or at least there used to be—something called Cuban nationalism. It would be surprising if there were not, since the island has always been dangerously close to the United States—in the sense of being unable to avoid invidious comparisons with the disproportionate wealth, power, and influence of its most important neighbor. Since there was nothing that could be done to change the facts of geography, successive generations of Cuban politicians preferred to focus on no-win issues, like the sugar quota. This was the sector of the U.S. domestic market reserved for Cuban exporters under the terms of a commercial treaty concluded in 1934. Although the arrangement made possible a living standard higher than that of any other country in the region (and one of the three highest in Latin America as a whole), Cuban nationalists habitually argued that it deliberately chained the country to a monoculture, and prevented it from becoming a major industrial power in its own right.

Since then hard experience has revealed this notion to be utterly without foundation. The quota was abolished during the Eisenhower administration, and that was followed shortly thereafter by an omnibus trade embargo. But 30 years of economic independence from the United States has not made Cuba richer or freer—quite the contrary. Ironically, today Castro's principal complaint is that the United States refuses to trade with him. Thus Cuban nationalism—at least in its current Castroite version—now stands for precisely the opposite of what it did in 1960.

It is anyone's guess why Castro thinks that normal relations with the United States will—*this* time—make his island somehow more resistant to our blandishments and vices. But according to Andrés Oppenheimer, for a new generation of Cubans, the United States, far from being an imperialist bogey, is something of a forbidden fruit, all the more delicious for remaining both close at hand and totally inaccessible. ("I love Miami," one teenager told him, "I could get a good pair of pants there.")

Aside from the effects of repression, and aside from the effects of nationalism, we are often told that most Cubans continue to support something called the "revolution." On closer examination, however, this term seems nothing more than a shorthand expression for all the events which have occurred on the island since Castro took power in 1959. Yet during that time the regime has changed ideological direction more than once. Since Cubans have not been allowed to vote, or to express themselves uninhibitedly for a generation and a half, we have no way of knowing with which "revolution" (if any) they identify. To speak of Castro's enduring "charisma" is not enough; to imagine that any regime can sustain the same legitimacy—or rule with the same assent—as it did 32 years ago is on the face of it incredible.

For some, the "revolution" means Cuba's alleged social and economic "gains"; for these people, many of whom may be otherwise critical of the regime's political and human-rights aspects, it is precisely here—and particularly in the areas of housing, education, and health—that one can locate the sources of Castro's continued appeal. Again, Andrés Oppenheimer:

> In Cuba of the late 1980's you didn't find the pockets of misery you stumbled on in virtually any other Latin American country. There were no beggars on the streets—at least no full-time ones. Everyone seemed to have a pair of shoes and a T-shirt, no matter how worn-out. Cuba had eliminated misery at the cost of imposing a general poverty.
>
> Most people seemed reasonably educated. . . . Street crime was rare. . . . College and postgraduate education were free, and there were large numbers of working-class students at the universities. . . .
>
> The revolution's greatest success had been providing a first-class health care system for free . . . even cosmetic surgery and orthodontic treatments were performed free of charge. By the late 1980's, more than 10,000 family doctors were seated throughout the island, about half in cities and half in rural areas.

And here are two American social scientists, Eliana Cardoso and Ann Helwege, reporting on a recent visit to Cuba:

> Despite the economic crisis, schools have composition paper and pencils. Day-care centers continue to have access to food, ensuring that children get at least minimal nutrition. The system has not generated the underclass of kids condemned to beg, steal, or pick through garbage that one finds elsewhere in Latin America.*

But there has been an important shift in the treatment of this subject. In the past, many writers on the Left regarded the issue of political freedom in Cuba as wholly gratuitous; things like free medical care provided their own, overarching justification and canceled out the regime's unlovely aspects. Today, however, even those (like Cardoso and Helwege) who are willing to give Castro the benefit of the doubt on education and health demand that the dictator countenance a political opening. One might well ask why. What, after all, is a bit of political repression in exchange for free plastic surgery and orthodontic treatments? Or universal day care?

The answer would seem to lie in the fact that the Cuban social-welfare system cannot, in any

* *Cuba After Communism.* MIT Press, 148 pp., $17.95.

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case, survive in its present form—for the simple reason that the Soviet subsidy has suddenly disappeared. And this, in and of itself, places the putative "gains" in a new and more searching light. After all, *any* small Caribbean country which received an annual subsidy of *$6 billion* for more than 30 years had better have something to show for it. But as studies by the demographer Nicholas N. Eberstadt of the American Enterprise Institute and others have suggested, in both literacy and infant mortality the Cuban record is far from remarkable, and roughly parallels that of many similar societies in the Western hemisphere—with the important exception that the latter did not receive a fraction of the foreign assistance doled out to Castro's Cuba.

Even admirers of the Cuban welfare system must tacitly recognize these inconvenient facts. Cardoso and Helwege worry that political change may imperil Cuba's revolutionary "gains"—that the Cuban people, if left to their own devices, might be inclined to make the "wrong" decisions. "With a transition to capitalism," they warn, "the commitment to basic needs may evaporate." But why, if the "commitment" has been as substantial as claimed, would any future government wish to disavow it? What seems to be suggested here is that the realities of Cuban education and health are very different from what the government claims. The truth may lie closer to the statement a Cuban mother recently made to the Miami *Herald*: "Cuba is supposed to be so medically sophisticated. But you know, we can't even find aspirin to bring down a child's fever."

OPPONENTS of our Cuban policy used to argue that since Castro was in power for good, we might as well make our peace with him and his system. Now, many of the same people have reversed the terms of the discussion: the reason Castro remains in power, they say, is that the United States continues to isolate his regime and to refuse "constructive engagement" with it. To put it another way, the same people who used to tell us that the trade embargo or Radio Martí would be powerless to unseat the Cuban dictator now blame those very things for keeping him in power. A more ductile policy of negotiations, they contend, would disarm the dictator, deprive him of much of his excuse for repression, and drive a wedge between him and many high-ranking members of his regime who are said to favor some sort of political opening.

This is the view, for example, of Wayne Smith, former chief of the U.S. Interests Section in Havana, as well as of Robert Pastor, former director of Latin American affairs on the National Security Council staff under Carter. It is emphatically endorsed by Cardoso and Helwege, who write that "[h]elping Cuba is far more important than overthrowing Castro. We must start negotiations before Cuba lands in our lap."

Such arguments cannot be dismissed entirely out of hand. Evidently, change in Cuba will have to come from within, and it is known that many high-ranking members of the *nomenklatura*—Oppenheimer calls them "Yummies" (Young Upwardly-Mobile Marxists)—are dreaming of a Mexican-type system, dominated by a single (putatively) leftist party which would nonetheless respect civil liberties and give way to private initiative. It is also true that a handful of Cuba's important dissidents have endorsed a lifting of the embargo and negotiations as the only civilized way out, as have some of the more liberal elements of the exile community in Florida.

Lifting the embargo would, certainly, deprive Castro of his principal excuse for economic failure—at least as far as foreigners are concerned. What impact it would have on Cuban society remains to be seen. This is true even in the narrow sphere of propaganda, since regimes which have a pathological need for enemies always succeed in finding them. At the more concrete level of commerce and tourism, it is striking that Castro himself seems not to fear in the least the possible consequences of a normalization of relations with the U.S. Quite the contrary, the near-totality of his foreign policy these days seems aimed at getting the embargo lifted or, at a minimum, circumventing it by luring Europeans, Canadians, and others to new, luxury tourist enclaves constructed with Spanish capital.

Oppenheimer thinks that these islands of free enterprise, restricted to Cuba's coastal margins, and from which most Cubans are prohibited from entering, cannot be prevented from spilling over into other sectors of the economy. Possibly he is right, but here again Castro sees matters differently. The dictator may recall that massive European tourism in Yugoslavia during the 60's and 70's did not disturb its existing political arrangements; the same was true for Franco's Spain. Yet tourism in Cuba is at present very small indeed compared to what it would be if American citizens were allowed to visit; whether the fall-out from *that* kind of exposure to foreigners could be so easily contained is another matter.

It is often said, too, that the United States can contemplate lifting the embargo without much risk of strengthening the regime because Castro is anyway not in a position to buy anything. It is certainly true that Cuba is not only bankrupt, but has few remaining sources of hard currency. Under no conceivable circumstances can it resume exporting sugar to the United States, since its share of the U.S. quota was long ago divided up among other producers.

Massive American tourism would, however, provide access to important amounts of hard currency, and it is not inconceivable that Castro could purchase large amounts of foodstuffs on credit, subsidized by the U.S. taxpayer. Many Americans would be surprised and even shocked to learn the degree to which ordinary lending constraints can be overridden by congressional

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fiat when a large market can be found for some important American export such as chickens, wheat, soybeans, or edible oils. Saddam Hussein's Iraq is a case in point. It seems, therefore, more likely that a renewal of trade would throw Castro a vital lifeline rather than abbreviate his rule.

Without doubt the embargo remains an important political symbol, if for no other reason than that Castro has made it so. Its elimination would naturally be represented by the Cuban dictator as a major political victory—a humiliation of the United States, which after 30-some years would finally have been forced to accept him as the sole representative of Cuba and its destiny. The effect would be to demoralize his internal opposition, most of which fears the psychological effects of such a development. This, at any rate, was the view of all but one of a dozen dissidents interviewed late last year by Christopher Kean of Freedom House. The most characteristic observation of all was made by Gustavo Arcos: "As long as the Castro regime lasts we think . . . that [the embargo] ought to be maintained. . . . Our message is not to give him a drop of oxygen, neither in the economic nor political area."

THERE is, finally, the argument that Castro is kept in power by fear of the exile community—variously estimated at between one-and-a-half and two million people. Most of these live in Southern Florida, but there are large expatriate communities in northern New Jersey, California, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island. Others have settled in Spain, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, or Venezuela, where they have distinguished themselves in business, publishing, or the arts. When the Castro regime talks about the diaspora, however, it uses the omnibus term "Miami," which is supposed to represent the most right-wing elements of the emigration.

Although they are among the most successful of American immigrant groups, Cuban-Americans have the most unfavorable public image here, at least among the prestige media and the cultural elites. This is no doubt partly due to the involvement of individual exiles in right-wing (and sometimes very right-wing) politics in the United States, such as the Watergate affair, and to the acts of violence committed by fringe elements against other refugees with whom they disagree. But it is also due to the fact that Cuban-Americans embrace rather uninhibitedly the bourgeois values of work, order, and family which are so out of cultural fashion these days, and seem to feel no particular obligation to countenance the misdeeds of other ethnic groups, particularly African-Americans. (Their vigorous anti-Communism has likewise not been appreciated.)

This vague distaste for the Cuban-American community—for its social values and political views—tends to color discussions of the Castro regime and Cuba's future. Evidently American liberals would not wish to live in a country run by Cuban-Americans (neither, probably, would American conservatives); but whether Cubans would find it so distasteful is far less clear, particularly considering the alternatives. Without elections or public-opinion polls we simply cannot know.

Yet the point is surely moot, since members of the exile community have been in the United States for at least a generation; some who identify themselves as Cuban-Americans were born in the United States. While they still vote Republican in overwhelming numbers, Democratic candidates are beginning to make significant gains among the younger generation. In any case, polls show that the vast majority have no intention of returning to live on the island, though many naturally would wish to visit or even establish some presence there. The latest surveys also show that only a tiny majority—about 8 percent—think that Cuba's future should somehow be determined by the emigration; 33 percent believe that it should be resolved wholly by those who have remained on the island, while 48 percent think that it should be co-determined by the two communities.

TO SUM UP: within what might be called the Soviet family of revolutions, only Cuba has managed to catch and hold the imagination of the United States. Because of the island's intense historical relationship with this country, its rejection of our economic system and way of life and its voluntary entry into the camp of our adversaries was an enormously traumatic event—and not only in raw geopolitical terms. The Cuban revolution has also represented at various times an alternative pole of attraction for American radicals, for the literary and artistic avant-garde, and for members of the print and (particularly) electronic media. Indeed, even now the Castro regime exercises a residual hold on the loyalties of our cultural elite, perhaps as an anti-mirror of American patriotism, order, property—the whole bourgeois bag of tricks.

Certainly there can be no other explanation as to why, all of a sudden, so many books, policy studies, and op-ed pieces are urging us to provide for Cuba what Cardoso and Helwege call a "soft landing." Could it be that a precipitous collapse threatens to reveal the real bases of its power, and in so doing, sweep away the last of the illusions that have nourished the socialist idea in the West for a half-century and more?

Castro, at any rate, seems utterly uninterested in the proposition of a "landing," soft or otherwise. It would appear that he understands far better than his increasingly tepid foreign sympathizers that there is no such thing as a truly popular Communist regime, and he is not about to embark upon dangerous experiments to relieve them of the embarrassment that has been provoked by the latest turn of world events.

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The Burial Society

Daniel E. Troy

It is a truism that we moderns are uncomfortable dealing with death—and especially uncomfortable dealing with dead bodies. Troubled by the very idea of our own mortality, we try to avoid its reminders, among which an actual dead person is certainly the most powerful. So it is no wonder that among modern Jews, knowledge of, and interest in, the *hevra kedisha* (literally, holy society)—the group of lay volunteers who prepare a Jewish body for burial—has declined over time, or that membership in such a society, although considered by Jewish religious law to be among the most laudable of activities, is now often thought to be exclusively the province of the black-garbed ultra-Orthodox.

This is unfortunate, because Jewish law relating to the newly dead has much to teach us, as I myself have learned from experience. Ever since my best and oldest childhood friend died suddenly eight years ago, my interest had been piqued by the *hevra kedisha*. Until I married, however, my inclination to join such a group was dampened by my general squeamishness concerning medical matters, as well as by my uncertainty about the level of religious observance required for membership. (Although I attend an Orthodox synagogue, keep kosher, and observe the Sabbath, I do not adhere to every jot and tittle of Jewish law.)

My wife's family, however, holds membership in the *hevra* in high regard. Her maternal grandfather participated in one in Germany, and her maternal grandmother was a member in Kansas City. (Men are allowed to attend only to dead men. Women technically are permitted to prepare both men and women for burial but, as a practical matter, women attend to women exclusively.) This heritage provided the impetus I needed, and thus one day I found myself volunteering on what I told myself was purely a trial basis. The rabbi assured me that one need not be a *tzaddik*—an especially righteous person—to join, only a committed Jew willing to do one's best.

This tolerant approach may reflect the relatively late development of the *hevra kedisha* as an organized institution. The earliest mention is in the Talmud, which reports that Rav Hamnuna (ca. 290-320 C.E.), arriving in a city where someone had recently died, observed the inhabitants going about their business. Irate, he threatened to excommunicate them for violating the injunction that burial of the dead takes precedence over all else. But then, upon hearing that burial societies existed in the town, Rav Hamnuna concluded that ordinary citizens were indeed permitted to continue work. Rav Hamnuna's ruling made the establishment of a *hevra kedisha* a top priority in most European communities. When Jews came to the United States, this was among the first institutions they established.

In Washington, where I live, many synagogues have their own *hevra*, contacted when a member of the community dies. Thus, a few weeks after my conversation with the rabbi, I was called upon to assist in my first *tahara*, or purification. When I arrived at the funeral parlor, I was told that the sixtyish man we were to prepare for burial weighed over 350 pounds, and had died of "chronic obesity." I guiltily squelched an adolescent urge to grin, and was doubly chastened as I watched Ben, our team leader, a physician in his early thirties, call around asking for a few more volunteers to help us deal with the difficulties created by the weight of the *met* (dead person). His tone in discussing the *met* was intensely respectful, and this set the stage for what I was to learn was the paramount directive in this experience: to show reverence for the person who has departed.

Judaism has always considered burying deceased loved ones to be a *mitzvah*, a religious duty and good deed, of supreme importance. Traditionally this view is based on Abraham's actions upon the death of his wife Sarah, when he turned to the neighboring sons of Heth and said, "A stranger and a sojourner am I with you; give me the possession of a burying place with you, that I may bury my dead from before me." This verse, the rabbis held, placed the responsibility for interment first on the family, and from there on the community as a whole. By the period of the Second Temple (ca. 465 B.C.E.-70 C.E.), according to

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the testimony of Josephus, to "let anyone lie unburied" was considered inhumane under Jewish law.

Jews try to bury their dead immediately, as befits a people whose origins were in the desert, where bodies decompose rapidly. The rabbinic teaching is that, unless necessary for the honor of the dead, "no corpse is to remain unburied overnight." Today, in most cases, a Jew is buried within a day after having died. This custom allows the family to begin coming to terms with the loss as soon as possible. Anyone who has experienced the death of a loved one knows that the time before burial is essentially a period of "limbo" (in Jewish tradition this condition is called *aninut*), and that only after the funeral can a family proceed with the difficult task of mourning.

As we walked to the room in the basement of the funeral parlor where we were to perform the *tahara*, we passed the *shomer*, or watcher, a man who stays with the recently deceased at all times. There are both practical and religious explanations for the constant presence of a *shomer*—as there are, incidentally, for most of the *hevra*'s ancient procedures. Practically, the *shomer* was originally needed to ward off mice and other animals that might inflict indignities on the corpse. He also may have helped guard against thieves who trafficked in dead bodies.

Today, when such considerations are less pressing, the *shomer* continues to serve a vital function. In the interval right after death and before burial, the deceased is especially vulnerable, having not yet reached a permanent "resting place" either in body or, so far as we know, in soul. (I well recall that when my friend died, his mother begged me to ensure that he was "not alone"; she did not want any further harm to befall his mortal remains.) The *hevra* has thus traditionally served to reassure the family that their loved one is being protected and cared for, a function reinforced by the custom of having the *shomer* be a respected and, presumably, well-known member of the community.

But this concern about the "address" of the newly dead is not solely for the sake of the surviving family. (Nor is it exclusively Jewish, as we can see in the proliferation of lawsuits against funeral parlors which confuse or switch bodies.) Judaism's regard for the body itself lies behind the determination to ensure that it, in its wholeness, be accorded a place after death. This is but one of the many reasons why Jewish law prohibits cremation. Aside from manifesting a disregard for God's handiwork, incinerating a body leaves it without any definable, knowable location in the world.

Although I was aware of some of these Jewish laws and customs concerning the body, I had never seen a dead person before. I was therefore quite fearful as I followed Ben and the four other members of our team down to the purification room in the funeral parlor. The room in which the *tahara* took place was in the basement, immediately adjacent to the embalming room. It was stark and relatively small, with two sinks, a cabinet, a drain in the middle of the floor, and a steel table that tilted for drainage purposes. Ben noticed my trepidation and reassured me: nothing was expected of a beginner other than to watch. I was free to do only what I felt comfortable doing and to leave any time I wanted. Ben warned us that smoking, eating, drinking, unnecessary talking, and praying near the body were all forbidden. Nothing was to distract us from the primary task at hand—preparing the *met* for eternal rest.

We entered the room, and there was the *met*, covered in a sheet, lying on a table. Ben explained the fundamental rules. As much of the body as possible is to be kept covered at all times, even while being washed. It is particularly important that the face and the genitals be shielded. At no time is it permitted to place the body face down. It is absolutely forbidden to pass anything over the body—a sign of profound disrespect, and a violation of the "personal space" of the *met*; if we had to give an item to someone on the other side of the table, we were to walk around and hand it to him.

The prohibition against passing objects over the *met* affirms the humanity of the person whose body is lying before us; it seeks to ensure that the members of the *hevra* continue to accord a dead person the respect normally given to those still alive. This consideration is by no means peculiar to Jews: for essentially the same reasons, people visiting a cemetery are reluctant to step directly on the spot where someone is buried. But in Jewish tradition the space above a *met* is reserved for him not only in the immediate vicinity but all the way "up to the heavens," so that his path to the divine will not be impeded. This suggests that we should respect a dead person even more than we do a living one, precisely because, in death, the *met* is thought to come face to face with his Maker and Judge.

After Ben's explanation of the procedures, we began by reciting the *hamol* ("forgiveness") prayer, which asks God to take mercy on the *met*, pardon his transgressions, and allow him to rest with our fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as well as the other righteous of Israel. Jewish prayers often characterize God as the reviver of the dead (in the time of the messiah); unusually, the *hamol* prayer adds that it is God Who causes the living to die.

Stealing glances during the prayer, I was surprised to observe that the *met* had a large tattoo. Since Jews are expressly forbidden by the Torah to tattoo their bodies, it seemed that this man had been far removed from Judaism in his life. And the distance became even more palpable

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when I heard his name—Yehudah *ben* (son of) Herman.* In other words, Yehudah's family did not even know his father's Hebrew name. Yet here he was, tattoo and all, being prepared for burial just as his ancestors had been for millennia. The stark contrast between Yehudah's apparently irreligious life and his choice to be buried in the ancient Jewish manner, in a shroud and in a closed, plain pine box, moved and confused me.

BEN assigned me the simple task of filling buckets with lukewarm water. The requirement that the water be set at the temperature at which most people feel comfortable taking a bath seemed yet another reminder that the *met* should be treated as sensitively as possible. Ben explained that the goal in a *tahara* is to replicate the immersion of the body in a *mikvah* (ritual bath). There are, again, at least two reasons for this ceremony. The first is ritual: to remove symbolically any impurity which the *met* might have brought upon himself during his lifetime. Humans can assist in eliminating this type of pollution, because it has arisen at the hand of man—i.e., the deceased. (The inherent impurity that comes from being a dead body, however, can be removed only by God.) The other reason is related to the vulnerability of the newly dead and the role of the *shomer.* Death completes the cycle of life. Practically the first experience of a baby is being washed and wrapped in swaddling clothes. It is fitting that this experience be mirrored in death.

Performing the *tahara* is uncomplicated. First, the entire body is fully washed, from head to toe, with water poured from a ladle back-handed, to indicate the sadness of the situation and that things are not "normal." Even the fingernails and toenails of the *met* are cleaned. Then, to ensure that as much as possible of the person be covered with water at one time, washed-down white wooden planks are placed under the body to lift it off the table. The *met* is next doused with at least three buckets of water simultaneously. This is the actual *tahara.*

Turning the *met* first on one side, then the other, we washed the body according to the specified protocol: first the head, then the right side of the body starting with the hand, up the arm; then the left side, also starting with the hand; then the right side of the back, followed by the left side of the back.

I was struck by the common sense of the order. We are, first and foremost, identified with and by our face and head. Inside our head resides our brain, seat of our conscious mind and therefore also of our "personality" (that which makes each of us unique), while our face is what we present to the world, often expressing outwardly our innermost being. By the time we reach our thirties, our faces have started permanently to assume a shape that is determined by the expressions we have employed throughout our lives. Often more than our eyes, our lines and wrinkles are windows to our souls.

After the head and face, the second most important part of ourselves seen by the world is our hands. These, almost as much as our face, embody who we are. The laborer's hands are calloused, the scholar's soft. And moving from the face directly to the hands also stresses the connection between the spiritual and the physical. The hands make real the soul's wishes. With our hands, we make love, hold our children, write, and mold the physical world in accordance with the dictates of our mind. It is therefore appropriate that we wash the head and hands for the last time in tandem.

While the others washed, I was given the task of cutting off every part of the covering sheet which contained any blood, so that it could be put in the coffin and buried with the *met,* as required by law. This rule is an extension of the strict prohibition against autopsies. Every part of a person—even a few spots of his blood on a sheet—is to be treated with equal respect and interred with him. Although the rule making the dead body inviolable has the effect of transforming every organ transplant into a difficult moral and legal question, it also establishes a very clear line, permitting transplants only under narrowly circumscribed conditions where there is an identifiable beneficiary.

In this case, the *met* had undergone a tracheotomy before death, and the endotracheal tube had to be removed before burial. (The tube was also placed in the coffin.) This proved somewhat bloody, and I quickly understood why my synagogue has a policy of having a doctor present at each *tahara.*

Although shifting the *met* onto the reclining table had not been difficult, placing the white boards under him and trying to establish a sufficient distance between him and the table to enable water to engulf him completely was somewhat trickier. Gently rolling the boards once we had placed them under the *met,* we were able to elevate him off the table.

We then performed the actual "immersion"—throwing the pails of water on the *met* while reciting a prayer that recalls Rabbi Akiva, one of the best-loved figures in rabbinic Judaism. It was Rabbi Akiva who opined that the Lord in heaven will cleanse those in need of purification. After the water was poured in a continuous stream over the departed, we recited in unison: "*Tahor hu; tahor hu; tahor hu*" ("He is purified; he is purified; he is purified").

We next proceeded to dress the *met* in white linen garments, covered his head in a hood, and draped a *tallit* (fringed garment worn in prayer)

* I have changed the actual name but preserved its flavor.

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around his shoulders. Judaism considers all people equal in death, and requires that everyone be treated alike. Ornate clothing, and fancy coffins, are expressly prohibited. This custom originated with Rabban Simeon ben Gamaliel II (in the first half of the 2nd century C.E.) who, alarmed at the extravagance and expense of funerals, ordered that his own funeral be extremely simple.

We slipped the *met* in his white linen shrouds into the *aron*, or ark (a much nicer word than coffin, especially since it recalls the place where the Torah scroll is kept in the synagogue). Spread on the bottom of the *aron* was dirt from the Mount of Olives outside of Jerusalem, where Jews have been laid to rest since the time of the Temple. This custom is based on the statement in Deuteronomy that "the earth shall atone for His people": the only earth believed capable of expiating the sins of the dead is that of the land of Israel.

Once the *met* was in the *aron*, we deposited pottery inside the head-covering, over his eyes. This is to address the mystics' concern that as long as the eyes of the *met* look upon this world, he cannot properly focus on the world-to-come. We also sprinkled dirt on his head, heart, and sex organ. The dirt, like the clay pottery, reaffirms the scriptural injunction, "Dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return."

We next placed the cover on the *aron*, bringing the *tahara* effectively to an end. The law strictly forbids reopening the *aron* for any reason. One of the many explanations for Judaism's insistence on a closed coffin is the lack of reciprocity inherent in the relationship between the *met* and those who remain alive. We may look at him, but he cannot see us. In this necessarily one-sided relation, we are voyeurs trafficking in the "disgrace" of his exposure. To prevent the dead person from being, as it were, embarrassed by his state, the coffin is closed.

The demand for a closed coffin is also another step in affirming the finality of death. It forces family members to begin thinking about the person as they will for the rest of their lives—as a memory; and it begins the separation process. It may also palliate the intensity of a family's grief. Finally, the prohibition on an open coffin avoids any temptation to cosmeticize the dead, or to visit upon him indignities of the type prevalent in modern American funeral homes and practices.

After the coffin is closed, but before leaving, each person in the *hevra* is instructed to beg silent forgiveness of the *met*. This apology is made in case anyone has inadvertently performed a part of the *tahara* in a manner not in accordance with the personal customs of the *met*. Jewish law also requires that each person speak aloud the name of the *met*.

At first this requirement seemed a little silly to me. Were we to pretend that Yehudah ben Herman had his own "customs" with respect to the *hevra kedisha*—or that he had ever given a moment's thought to ritual purification? The notion of us standing around a dead body uttering aloud his slightly ridiculous Jewish name made me uncomfortable, to say the least.

I was wrong. To accomplish any *tahara* requires a degree of distance from the *met*. That depersonalization ended the moment we spoke Yehudah ben Herman's name. We were reminded that a man, like us, lay before us in the *aron*: a man with a wife, children, co-workers, friends, and loved ones who were affected by his death. The little custom of speaking Yehudah's name drove home to me the genius of those who had formulated the rules. Just as the practices of the *hevra* reinforce the Jewish prohibition against autopsies or any other purely utilitarian use of the body, they guard against what Leon Kass of the University of Chicago has called the "commodification of human flesh." The Jewish approach takes account of the powerful sense residing in every human being that the body should be respected, even after the person who inhabited it has left.

THE rabbis describe participation in a *hevra kedisha* as a *hesed shel emet* (a true act of kindness), since no reward can be expected from the dead for whom the service is performed. Although the prospect of meriting such high praise may have been thought necessary in order to motivate people to join a *hevra* (or to ensure that only sincere people join), in my view the rabbis were being deliberately hyperbolic. Clearly the *hevra* experience does offer many rewards. For one thing, having esteemed members of the community care for a dead person makes an enormous difference to that person's family. For another, the *hevra* sees to it that all people, high and low, are treated equally in death, and that their funerals and burial garments do not become a cause for ostentation. Finally, and perhaps most relevantly to our own day, the respect shown to a dead person by the *hevra* can affect profoundly the way those of us who remain alive view our own humanity. In all these regards, the laws of the *hevra kedisha* serve the dead *and* the living.

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Holy Hollywood!

Edward Norden

DURING the presidential campaign much was heard from Dan Quayle and others about how Hollywood is arrogantly, mischievously out of touch. After all, this is a country where more people than in any other continue to tell pollsters that they believe in God. "The distance," wrote Pat Buchanan, "from *The Sands of Iwo Jima* to *Born on the Fourth of July*, from *The Song of Bernadette* to *The Last Temptation of Christ* is more than four decades. Hollywood has crossed a cultural and religious divide and left us on the other side."

All of which may well be true, and seems to be confirmed by no less an authority on the movies than Michael Medved in his new book, *Hollywood vs. America*.* Whether or not they are the exception that proves the rule, however, two interesting movies were released by Hollywood this past summer in which organized religion got all the flattering angles.

First to hit the screen, successfully entertain the masses, and disappear until its video reincarnation was *Sister Act*, directed by Emile Ardolino and starring Whoopi Goldberg as a black singer in a Las Vegas casino-hotel who is, improbably, the spoiled, mistreated, foul-mouthed mistress of its mafioso owner. Witness to a rubout, the singer turns state's evidence and for her protection is stowed in a convent. This does her a world of good, and in turn she does the convent's neighboring parish church a world of good, too. We are asked to believe that the dawn wake-ups, the chastity, the swabbing of floors, the plain habit, the discipline, and communal feeling bring out the *mentsh* in her. She then overcomes initial resistance to vitalize the nuns' choir, lending it that Motown sound and gaining worldwide acclaim for the up-to-now sleepy church in which it performs.

The main idea behind *Sister Act* is obviously to showcase Whoopi Goldberg's singing and mugging talents, and the movie is basically one of those summertime boilerplate releases which Hollywood can produce in its sleep and which often enough find an audience to lap them up—certainly the audience in the theater with me did, and so, to judge by reports of the movie's receipts, did audiences elsewhere around the country. In particular, the gag of a mannish hooker costumed as a nun is milked to the last drop. Is this the birth of a tradition? Hollywood does nothing more readily than ape its own successes, and *Nuns on the Run* (1990), featuring Cockney gangsters hiding in a convent, also did well according to *Variety*.

It would be wrong to read too much into the compliments *Sister Act* pays to religion or to the religious life. Conceivably they are cynical, Hollywood's way of lighting a candle to the devil. A traditional Catholic might consider the movie's entire premise disrespectful. Yet the respect *Sister Act* does show, or pretends to show, ought to be noticed—as does the repeatedly and blatantly implied notion that human relations in the convent and neighboring church are wonderful compared with the big world outside. Once the change in American styles during the last half-century is factored in, *Sister Act* emerges as an up-to-date, perishable version of two old movies about Catholic priests and nuns—*Going My Way* (1944) and its equally popular, heartwarming, and lucrative sequel, *The Bells of St. Mary's* (1945).

WHEN it comes to pretensions, however, *Sister Act* has few compared with the second of the summer's pro-religion movies, *A Stranger Among Us*. Here we are asked by the director, Sidney Lumet, to believe that when a Hasid is murdered in the New York diamond market, the detective assigned to the case might be a miniskirted *shikse* played by Melanie Griffith, who covers her elbows and knees to pass as a *baalat tshuvah* (religious returnee) in the world of the Hasidim—*and* that before this daughter of an Irish cop solves the case, she not only comes to appreciate that these people hold the secret of the right life, but has a flirtation with their *rebbe*'s hunk of a genius son. No wonder the *L.A. Weekly* disapproved: "An old leftie like Lumet should recognize such pleading as the very definition of reactionary."

Though Lumet's politics have sometimes had to be inferred in his dozens of movies, just as often they come through loud and clear. His specialty is the slice-of-life—*Serpico* (1973), *Prince of the City* (1981), *Q&A* (1990)—in which there are sure to be flashes of virtuosity. Usually, the inferrable politics is hard-nosed reform liberalism. But no one watching *Daniel* (1983) could fail to understand that the enemy was capitalism and that if the old Communist party had some faults, the New Left did not. Lumet's weakness, odd for a specialist in hard-edged scenes, has been his sentimental preachiness. Into his homilies he has often inserted obviously Jewish characters, sometimes front and center. Until *Stranger*, however, the only religiously observant Jew was

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* See the review by John Podhoretz on p. 53.—ED.

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the deranged mother of the Ethel Rosenberg figure in *Daniel.*

All the more unexpected, then, this hymn to the contemporary ultra-Orthodox, for which the director has been whipped both by his political friends and by those who know Williamsburgh. The comments of the latter are on target. Missing from this portrayal of the Hasidim with its Rembrandt lighting are the hardness of their self-imposed ghetto, the strain of craziness, the fear of and contempt for blacks and Puerto Ricans, the sticky linoleum, the peaked mothers, the naked fluorescent tubes, the teenagers worrying their earlocks, the scams on lapsed Jews with money. Even a movie as sweet as *The Chosen* (1981) was better on the crucial small things, down to the little girl sitting on her father's knee as he studies a page of Talmud with a roomful of other men.

So the complaints of those who know their various Jews are on target. But they are also, in our context here, not very much to the point. Listen to what Lumet had to say in one of his post-opening interviews:

> This is about a woman who comes into contact with a completely alien culture and how it opens her up. It warms her up. Makes her human again. It became necessary to treat that culture almost romantically, with a softness and gentleness that Hasidism itself doesn't have. . . .

IN OTHER words, perhaps even while making it, Lumet wished *Stranger* to be a fable, its moral that one angry, unfulfilled woman of a type not exactly unknown in Manhattan and the Westside of L.A. could be rid of her anger, could glimpse fulfillment in a mini-society where women are kept in their place.

This is serious heresy, much more dangerous than the implications of, for example, the rosy picture of the Amish painted in *Witness* (1985). Lumet's courage in enunciating it must be saluted. True, Melanie Griffith's character does not go the whole hog, convert, and move to Brooklyn. But by the end we are sure that she will never again say, "I'm an independent woman, see?"

The reviewer in the New York *Times*, panning *Stranger*, guessed that its purpose was "to stimulate interest in Jewish precepts and traditions." True, Lumet has said that he thinks it is time real Jews were portrayed on the screen. He denies, however, that he has gotten religion. He is still politically "progressive," though he believes that the Hasidim, simply by being there, "are performing a great, great benefit." Whatever his motivation or his purpose, never before has an identifying Jew bothered to do a movie in which the old-time religion gets the better of current shibboleths, above all feminism. (*The Chosen*, though more authentic, kept hands off the woman question.) In this respect *Stranger* may turn out to have been a freak occurrence, or it may turn out to be a pioneering step, as was another bad movie of Lumet's, *The Pawnbroker* (1965), the first Hollywood film about the Holocaust to be set in America.

Many people think that we are living through the preliminary rounds of a bloody national culture war. If this is true, religion is bound to be a chief issue and weapon, and among other places the war will be fought in the movie theaters and video libraries of the land. You can never tell who is going to see a movie and have his life drastically or subtly altered by it. Already, the audience for a movie like *Stranger* is not just one of retired Jews and their parents—I saw and heard surfer girls nibbling their hot buttered popcorn while Melanie Griffith learned values. Do *Sister Act* and *A Stranger Among Us* portend something?

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Out of Sync

HOLLYWOOD VS. AMERICA: POPULAR CULTURE AND THE WAR ON TRADITIONAL VALUES. By MICHAEL MEDVED. *HarperCollins. 386 pp. $20.00.*

Reviewed by JOHN PODHORETZ

Hollywood vs. America is a passionate and immensely readable polemic about the entertainment industry's self-destructive assault on the ideas and mores of its American audience. Michael Medved, the affably innocuous co-host of the weekly PBS movie-review show, *Sneak Previews*, here shows little evidence of his TV persona; instead, his plainspoken book combines eye-opening research, encyclopedic detail, and sophisticated analysis to explain how Hollywood's alienation from traditional values is itself alienating American moviegoers and television viewers.

Given the intensive focus these days on the American entertainment industry, one might think that movies were more popular than ever, and that more people were watching television than ever. Medved demonstrates that neither is true. Movie attendance is half what it was 30 years ago, while the network-television audience is a third smaller than it was 15 years ago. Even such new forms of entertainment as video rentals are down, with a startling 6-percent decline in 1991 alone.

Whenever the entertainment industry is in trouble, it usually blames tough economic times. Today's film-studio bosses also blame their predecessors for choosing lousy projects, and network executives blame the advent of cable. All believe that success is unpredictable, and are fond of citing the screenwriter William Goldman's dictum that "nobody knows anything" about what makes money at the box office. Yet Medved believes he knows the answer: Hollywood is willfully blind to America's growing disaffection with its wares.

Medved, an Orthodox Jew, begins with religion. Present-day Hollywood pays obeisance to a fashionable paganism, ranging from New Age pseudo-spirituality to American Indian mysticism—as befits "a community in which Shirley MacLaine has more followers than either Moses or Jesus." At the same time, the entertainment industry "regularly ridicules religious believers as crooks or crazies." Here is a Hollywood producer on the decision to spend some $30 million on a 1985 epic about King David: "'We wanted to make a film with guts. We wanted to do it with integrity. We don't see David as some Holy Joe, praise-the-Lord kind of guy.'"

Turning the author of the Psalms into an atheist helped earn *King David* its reputation as one of the notorious flops of the 1980's, but not the only one whose failure can be traced directly or indirectly to an offending portrayal of religion on screen. Medved cites dozens of comparable examples, summarizing their plots in the profoundly ironical voice he devised for his two hilarious books about bad movies, *The Golden Turkey Awards* and *Son of the Golden Turkey Awards*. As for movies with a positive religious message over the past decade, he comes up with a total of exactly seven.

The bizarre thing about this Hollywood fashion, especially given the fact that every week 78 million Americans attend church while only 19 million go to the movies, is that it has proved financially ruinous:

> The cinematic assaults on religion have lost hundreds of millions for the people who made them, but the major studios . . . persist in throwing good money after bad.

Medved sees "a perverse sort of idealism" in this peculiar approach to the principle of economic self-interest:

> For many of the most powerful people in the entertainment business, hostility to organized religion goes so deep and burns so intensely that they insist on expressing that hostility, even at the risk of financial disaster. . . . It is clear that a powerful prejudice is at work.

MEDVED's most original insights have to do with the growing display of moral and spiritual ugliness on screen, expressions of an anarchic streak which, more than anything else, defines today's Hollywood ethos. Cinematic characters *now regularly vomit and urinate* on screen, presumably for no other reason than to impress upon the viewer the harsh nature of reality. There has even been a recent Hollywood obsession with cannibalism (though, with the exception of *The Silence of the Lambs*, movies featuring the practice have understandably flopped). And of course the language used has become progressively more obscene. In 1991, Medved reports, "the *average* R-rated movie contain[ed] 22 F-words, 14 S-words, and 5 A-words—providing its viewers with a major obscenity every two-and-a-half minutes." Movies aimed at least in part at children are not much better:

> I am always amazed at how many parents still cling to the notion that a PG or PG-13 rating for a film means that their children will be spared the most intense obscenities. This supposition hardly squares with the fact that 39 percent of 1991 PG-13 films used the F-word, 66 percent used the A-word, and an amazing 73 percent used the S-word!

To Hollywood, the only real transcendence afforded in life is sex—and not marital sex, either.

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According to a 1988 study by Planned Parenthood, the three major television networks broadcast a total of more than 65,000 sexual references annually—or 27 an hour. A 1981 study analyzing one episode of each network series "found 41 instances of sexual intercourse outside of marriage, and only six references to intercourse between married people." Although Americans in overwhelming numbers get married and stay married, and believe marriage is an unvarnished good, Hollywood insists on portraying marriage as a failing or failed institution.

FOR Medved, there are clear ideological and even spiritual consequences to this misreading of the national condition:

> The emphasis on disastrous relationships, and the paucity of positive alternatives, contribute powerfully to the prevailing sense that marriage is an institution under siege; that happy couples are an endangered species; that misery and cruelty are inevitable byproducts of the traditional family structure.

The same feelings of instability are engendered by Hollywood's obsession with violence and crime. Television characters are murdered at a rate a thousand times greater than people in real life. Medved concedes that crime will, for understandable reasons, always be "overrepresented in popular entertainment," but warns that "the ominous view of the world conveyed by the popular culture contributes powerfully to the insecurity and paranoia that in turn facilitate increased levels of criminal activity." Unfortunately, he also resorts to some shaky social science attempting to demonstrate a direct relation between crime on screen and an increase in criminal behavior among America's youth. The studies he cites are interesting and sobering, but hardly definitive.

The central point of *Hollywood vs. America* is, however, unassailable: not only is there a gaping chasm between Hollywood's America and the real America, but Hollywood seems willing to pay in the coin of reduced profits for its continued refusal to bridge the chasm. In 1990, four times as many R movies were made as G or PG movies combined. In 1991, 61 percent of the movies released were rated R. Yet according to a statistical study done especially for this book, "since 1980 . . . a given G or PG film is nearly five times more likely to place among the year's box-office leaders than an R film." In general, movies rated R "generate substantially less revenue, return less profit, and are more likely to 'flop' than films aimed at teen and family audiences."

These statistics "destroy the arguments that the industry's long-standing and hugely unbalanced emphasis on 'adult' fare is dictated by financial self-interest." Whether or not they think their beliefs and attitudes mirror those of the American people, Hollywood's leading lights are doing what they do because they believe in it.

THE comedian Jackie Mason once offered a memorable comment on Hollywood's obsession with explicit sex:

> People say you have to have sex in every picture because it reflects real life. But I say, people also have soup. I never heard anybody in a movie say, "I'm looking for a nice plate of soup."

The last four years have been, without question, the worst in Hollywood history. Moviegoing has become a profoundly unsatisfying experience. Michael Medved has diagnosed the cause and suggested a very reasonable solution: less sex, more soup.

In 272 Words

LINCOLN AT GETTYSBURG: THE WORDS THAT REMADE AMERICA. By GARRY WILLS. *Simon & Schuster. 317 pp. $23.00.*

Reviewed by WALTER BERNS

GARRY WILLS has a lot of interesting things to say about the Gettysburg Address, and especially about the occasion on which it was delivered. We learn, for example, that far from arriving at the last minute, as popular mythology has it, Lincoln anticipated the difficulties of reaching Gettysburg at a time when the railroad facilities were certain to be overtaxed and, against the advice of the men in charge of his schedule, set out from Washington a day in advance. Wills also puts to rest the story that Lincoln composed his address on the back of an envelope during the 80-mile train trip to Gettysburg.

The President could have been excused had he done so, however, because according to the official program he was expected to deliver only a few "Dedicatory Remarks." The real Gettysburg Address—the "Oration"—was to be delivered by Edward Everett, the most famous orator of the time. (As was his custom, Everett committed his two-hour speech to memory.) In the event, Lincoln said what he had to say in 272 words and in one-fourth the time consumed by the Reverend T.H. Stockton, D.D., who delivered the opening prayer.

Yet, according to Wills, those 272 words "remade America." What Lincoln did was revolutionary: "He not only put the Declaration [of Independence] in a new light as a matter of founding *law*, but put its central proposition, equality, in a newly favored position as a principle of the Constitution." By doing so he "performed one of the most daring acts of open-air sleight-of-hand ever witnessed." Everyone in that vast throng—some 10,000 to 20,000 people managed to get there for the occasion—had "his or her intellectual pocket picked."

Wills says that "some people, looking on from a distance, saw that a giant (if benign) swindle had been performed." By exalting the principle of equality, Lincoln had transformed the Constitution into an antislavery document, and, according to a report in the Chicago *Times*, this was a "libel" on the men who had written and ratified it: "'They were men possessing too much self-respect to declare that negroes were their equals, or were entitled to equal privileges.'" Wills

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goes on to say that even today, "heirs to this outrage still attack Lincoln for subverting the Constitution at Gettysburg—suicidally frank conservatives like M.E. Bradford or the late Willmoore Kendall." But, he adds, "most conservatives are unwilling to challenge a statement now so hallowed, so literally sacrosanct, as Lincoln's clever assault on the constitutional past."

SWINDLE, outrage, clever assault on the constitutional past? These are obviously serious charges, but Wills makes no effort to substantiate them—at least, not in this book. The issue has to do with the meaning of the Declaration of Independence and its relation to the Constitution. In an earlier book, *Inventing America*—which is nothing so much as *his* attempt to remake America—Wills argued that there was not one Declaration of Independence but three: the one Jefferson wrote (which Wills liked), the one adopted by the Continental Congress on July 4, 1776 (which he did not like), and the one we know today which, he claimed, was largely a product of Lincoln's imagination.

Jefferson's Declaration, Wills said in *Inventing America*, was "philosophical and nonpolitical"; it was only by tampering with it that the Congress managed to come up with one that was "mainly political." And it was only by romanticizing it that Lincoln could convert it into a statement of principle characterizing the nation and marking its birth:

> Fourscore and seven years ago [that is, in 1776] our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

But there is no evidence for any of this. Jefferson never disowned the Declaration adopted in 1776; on the contrary, in the epitaph he wrote, and which was inscribed on his gravestone, he proudly described himself as the "Author of the Declaration of American Independence."

And rather than understanding his Declaration to be "nonpolitical," Jefferson, in the course of responding to an invitation to participate in a celebration of its 50th anniversary, asked that it

> be to the world what I believe it will be (to some parts sooner, to others later, but finally to all): the signal of arousing men to burst the chains under which monkish ignorance and superstition had persuaded them to bind themselves, and to assume the blessings and security of self-government.

As for Wills's insistence, argued at length in *Inventing America*, that this nation was founded not in 1776 but in 1787, the year the Constitution was written, I offer the testimony of the Constitution itself which, in the seventh and last of its original articles, refers to 1787 as the twelfth year "of the independence of the United States."

And, finally, as to Lincoln's having given a new meaning and significance to the phrase "all men are created equal," I offer the testimony of Alexander Stephens, the Vice President of the Confederate States of America. Speaking at Savannah, Georgia, on March 21, 1861, concerning the recently adopted Confederate constitution, Stephens renounced Jefferson—in fact, *denounced* him—precisely because, "like most of the leading statesmen at the time of the old Constitution," he had held that "the enslavement of the African was in violation of the laws of nature: that it was wrong in principle, socially, morally, and politically." Those ideas—Jefferson's ideas as well as Lincoln's—were themselves fundamentally wrong, Stephens said. "They rested upon the assumption of the equality of the races. This was an error."

What, then, was new in Lincoln's "new interpretation of that principle of the founders which declared that 'all men are created equal'"? Lincoln read it, after all, as Jefferson read it, as the dissenters in the *Dred Scott* case read it, and as (up to a certain point in our history) almost everyone, even Alexander Stephens, read it. They read it to mean that *all* men were created equal insofar as they all—blacks and whites alike—were equally endowed by Nature's God with certain unalienable rights. They read it to mean that the Constitution was flawed insofar as it permitted slavery to exist under the laws of the states.

Were they mistaken about this? Strangely, Wills never addresses the question.

IN FACT, Wills is less concerned with what Lincoln did at Gettysburg than with the manner of what he said there. Lincoln, we are told, was "a man of his own age," and the manner of his saying "owes a great deal to the primary intellectual fashion of his period, Transcendentalism."

From this Wills launches into a discussion of the New England Transcendentalists Theodore Parker and Ralph Waldo Emerson, and thence, easily enough, into an analysis of classical rhetoric. In fact, the bulk of the book is devoted to rhetoric and how it was employed not only by Lincoln but by the men who are said to have influenced him: Daniel Webster and Edward Everett during America's "romantic era," and Pericles and Gorgias in classical antiquity. (Their funeral orations, along with Everett's and Lincoln's, are reproduced in an appendix.) The point of the book (itself a rhetorical *tour de force*) is to demonstrate that Lincoln was a brilliant rhetorician.

That point has been made before, but never with so much attention given to the structure of Lincoln's major speeches. Lincoln, we know, had mastered the first six books of Euclid's *Elements*, and had studied grammar (at a time when grammar was studied seriously), but Wills shows how he employed its tools—antithesis, for example, and anaphora and asyndeton—to maximum advantage in the Gettysburg Address. It is the greatest American speech, and Lincoln was our greatest speechmaker; Wills succeeds in confirming our judgment of that. Without intending to do so, however, he also confirms our judgment that Lincoln was our greatest statesman.

An Englishman, Lord Charnwood, was one of the first to recognize this. "Many great deeds had been done in the war," he wrote in

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his magnificent memoir of Lincoln, but the greatest by far were those done by Lincoln. He made it possible for the Union to be preserved (and as Charnwood rightly said, "nobody else could have done it"); he also made it possible for us to see that it was worth preserving. He did this with his words, especially those spoken at Gettysburg.

The Gettysburg Address had been long in preparation; as Wills puts it, "all his prior literary, intellectual, and political labors had prepared him for [it]." This, I think, can be made evident by examining the substance, and not merely the structure, of what he said at Gettysburg and in two of the many speeches, or parts of speeches, that prefigure it. All of them focus on the problem of "the capability of a people to govern themselves."

LINCOLN first addressed this problem in a speech to the Young Men's Lyceum of Springfield, Illinois, delivered when he was not yet twenty-nine years old. Much of that early speech was given over to a discussion of the passions and the role they play in the politics of a self-governing people. During the early years of the Republic, Lincoln said, human passions were a "pillar of our temple of liberty"; specifically, the "deep-rooted principles of *hate*, and the powerful motive of *revenge*, instead of being turned against each other, were directed exclusively against the British nation." But that would change, he said, as the memory of the Revolution faded. From then on, the passions would be a problem—unless, somehow, they could be made to supplement and strengthen the people's rational attachment to the Constitution.

At the time of the second speech, Lincoln was taking the presidential oath of office. Much of that First Inaugural was an appeal to the Southern states not to secede from the Union. But Lincoln knew that they would, and that, in fact, seven of them already had. He concluded the speech with these moving words, words that can be appropriately uttered only on a few occasions in the life of a nation:

> I am loath to close. We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though *passion* may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of *memory*, stretching from every battlefield, and patriot grave, to every living heart and hearthstone, all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature. [Emphasis added.]

In his earlier Lyceum speech Lincoln had said that memories, even memories stretching from the graves of patriots, grow cold as they grow old, unless, by a rhetoric so powerful, they can be made immortal. Such a rhetoric would require a special occasion, and that occasion was more than likely to present itself. When, in 1863, it did, he delivered his noblest speech, in 272 words, on a battlefield. "We are met on a great battlefield of that war," Lincoln said at Gettysburg, and the purpose of the meeting was to dedicate a cemetery filled with the graves of patriots: to dedicate a cemetery, then, and, in the process, to rededicate the nation by creating new "mystic chords of memory" binding the living and the yet unborn to the cause for which those dead had given "the last full measure of devotion."

Lincoln was more than a great rhetorician; he was, and is, this nation's greatest poet. Without giving him that title, Americans somehow know this, and the fact that they know it is not the result of accident. As Harry V. Jaffa writes, in what is still the best study of Lincoln's words,

> Many things in [his] life, like the accident of his death, may have been fortuitous—or providential—but the myth that came to life with his passing was neither. It was the finely wrought consummation, of philosophic insight and a poetic gift, of a life devoted to the problem of "the capability of a people to govern themselves."

Lincoln at Gettysburg would have been a better book had it said something like this.

Torah & Politics

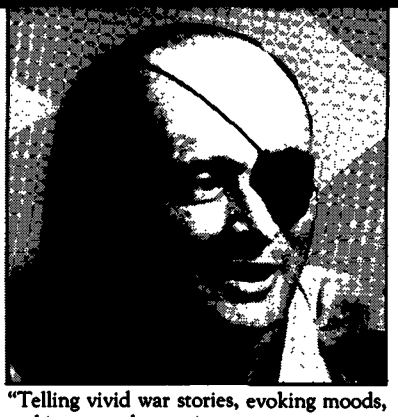
JUDAISM, HUMAN VALUES, AND THE JEWISH STATE. By YESHAYAHU LEIBOWITZ. Edited by ELIEZER GOLDMAN. *Harvard University Press. 291 pp. $39.95.*

Reviewed by ALLAN NADLER

YESHAYAHU LEIBOWITZ has long been one of the most eccentric figures in Israeli intellectual life. A respected biochemist, maverick Jewish theologian, and outspoken political crank, he has captured the attention and admiration of many Israelis and American Jews with his radical approach to contemporary Judaism and Middle East politics. Though himself a rigorously Orthodox Jew and a Zionist, Leibowitz preaches a paradoxi-

ALLAN NADLER *is director of research at the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research in New York City.*

Moshe Dayan
Story of My Life



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cally transcendent, anti-nationalist Jewish theology while also freely engaging in attacks on the government and political culture of Israel.

As a theologian, Leibowitz denies that God actively intervenes in human affairs, and he thus rejects completely the traditional Jewish religious belief in divine providence and God's miraculous involvement in the world. He nonetheless insists that, though the Creator of man is essentially uninterested in his mundane existence, the Jews are still expected to serve Him in their daily lives by observing the dictates of the Torah.

As will be immediately evident to readers of this first English collection of Leibowitz's essays, the late Gershom Scholem, the great scholar of Jewish mysticism, was on to something when he accused Leibowitz of atheism: "'Though you may believe in Torah,'" Leibowitz quotes Scholem as saying, "'you certainly do not believe in God.'" In fact Leibowitz is no atheist, but the God in Whom he believes in no way resembles the God of classical Jewish theology.

To Leibowitz, the sole constant of Judaism and its only essential, distinguishing feature is the *halakhah*, or Jewish religious law. But his philosophy of *halakhah* is purely positivistic: in Leibowitz's version of Judaism there is no place for anything beyond a slavish, unselfish, and otherworldly adherence to the Torah's 613 *mitzvot*, or commandments:

> If the *mitzvot* are in the service of God, not of man, they may not be directed toward the satisfaction of human wants. Any attempt to ground them in human needs—cognitive, moral, social, and national—deprives them of their religious meaning.

Leibowitz's absolute exclusion of earthly or human concerns from the sphere of religion finds specific expression in his contempt for what he calls "the two great distortions of Jewish faith"—the Kabbalah and Reform Judaism. Leibowitz not only rejects Jewish mysticism's view of God as emanating "into" the world; he also repudiates the late-kabbalistic doctrine of *tikkun olam*, an interpretation of *halakhic* observance as a vehicle for the reparation of flaws both in the Godhead and in the created universe. He is even less tolerant of Reform Judaism's emphasis on the ethical monotheism of the prophetic tradition at the expense of faithfulness to rabbinic law. He defines all ethically based systems of religion, such as Reform Judaism, as "atheism *par excellence*."

Finally, the requirement to exclude completely all selfish, earthly motives from religious practice pertains not only to the spiritual life of the individual Jew but in equal measure to the people of Israel. So, for example, Leibowitz has little patience with a view of Jewish law as an instrument for the advancement of Jewish nationhood. And he is still less patient with the Conservative movement's appreciation of *halakhah* as the constantly evolving expression of the Jewish people's encounter with history. For

> the service of God as crystallized in the *halakhah* is an ahistoric reality. Historical vicissitudes and changes have no bearing on man's posture before God.

FEW scholars would deny that rabbinic law has been, since classical times, the one historic constant of Judaism. For almost two millennia, until the breakdown of traditional European Jewish society in the 19th century, faithfulness to *halakhah* was the *sine qua non* of traditional Jewish faith. But in no school of Judaism did the rule of law rule out the rest of life, or exclude entirely all other manifestations of spirituality, as it does in Leibowitz's system. Indeed, Leibowitz's strict legal positivism is without precedent in Jewish thought, and impossible to reconcile with almost any reasonable interpretation of the canonical sources of Judaism.

To begin with, Leibowitz's system ignores what most authorities consider the defining characteristic of Jewish law, namely, its responsiveness to human needs and to social and historic change. By its nature, *halakhah* is an evolving system of jurisprudence which is constantly challenged to address new historical, social, scientific, and technological realities.

Then, too, Leibowitz's radical removal of God from history cannot be squared with the actual Scriptural record. In maintaining that Judaism is a completely otherworldly faith, Leibowitz is forced to dismiss the many biblical and rabbinic texts which connect God intimately with the affairs of this world, and which emphasize the Creator's intimate concern for the welfare of His people. Whereas, for example, Leibowitz takes Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son Isaac as the great paradigm of the selfless worship of God, in fact one of the overriding principles of normative Jewish law is the preservation and enhancement of life. This is reflected in a number of juridical principles, not least of which is the *halakhic* rule that "*pikuakh nefesh*," or the saving of human life, overrides all but three of the Torah's 613 commandments. In short, Leibowitz's Judaism is a sad caricature of the religion it purports to define.

BY FAR the most troubling aspect of this collection of essays, however, is the overtly political use to which Leibowitz puts his ostensibly anti-political theology. Because he insists that Judaism must never be concerned with earthly life, Leibowitz categorically rejects the attribution of intrinsic sanctity to the Jewish people's return to Zion, and directs his sharpest criticism against religious Zionism's sacerdotal interpretation of modern Jewish history, its conviction that the creation of modern Israel is of messianic significance, and the belief of some of its spokesmen in the holiness of "every inch" of the biblical lands of Judea and Samaria. In the same spirit Leibowitz rails against the corruptions of Israel's domestic religious establishment and insists on the total separation of "synagogue and state."

But Leibowitz is just as guilty of using religion to advance his own political agenda as are those whom he criticizes. The very sequence of the essays in this volume tells the tale: part one is entitled "Faith"; part two, "Religion, People, State";

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and part three, "The Political Scene." Leibowitz's evaluation of the last derives directly from his particular interpretation of the first. Here, then, is a book which combines a theology of total retreat from the affairs of the world with a specific political posture emerging out of that very theology.

Leibowitz has long been celebrated as the most dovish Orthodox Jew in Israel. Indeed, if his theology has found virtually no following even among the religious, his political proclamations are avidly sought out and quoted not only by the Israeli peace movement but by foreign journalists and others. That Leibowitz's strident attacks on Israel's political culture are at least as peculiar for an Orthodox Jew as is his theology only seems to add to the charm. Isaiah Berlin, for example, has praised Leibowitz as "one of Israel's greatest moral assets" and "the conscience of Israel: the clearest and most honorable champion of those principles which justify the creation of a sovereign state."

In this book the "conscience" of Israel repeats his well-known warnings against incipient fascism in the Jewish state and his opinion of religious Zionism as a form of idolatry; the editor, clearly an admirer of Leibowitz, has judiciously chosen *not* to include his outrageous characterization of Israel's leaders during the war in Lebanon as Judeo-Nazis or other similarly extreme statements. There is not even so much as an allusion in this collection of essays to the tragedies of recent Jewish history or to the murderous record of the Arab nations toward the Jews and Israel, let alone to the fact that Israel is and remains a democratic state.

As FOR the Western liberals and intellectuals who are so charmed by the radical politics and anti-ecclesiastical proclamations of this sage in a black yarmulke, they have, in many respects, the wrong man. Many who invoke Leibowitz to advance their own agenda often speak in the name of "*tikkun olam*," but, as we have seen, there is hardly anything in Jewish thought more repugnant to Leibowitz than the idea that it is the business of religion to "correct" the world. Leibowitz's political followers also resolutely ignore his deep religious intolerance, his rejection of the pluralism of Jewish thought, and his contempt for the pluralism of Jewish life. In Leibowitz's world of Orthodox exclusivism, most of his own greatest admirers are allowed no legitimate place. That this does not deter them from parading him as their authority, or him from courting the publicity they have given his views, is only another confirmation of the old saw about politics making strange bedfellows.

The System

THE LIFE OF THE PARTIES: A HISTORY OF AMERICAN POLITICAL PARTIES. By A. JAMES REICHLEY. *Free Press. 487 pp. $27.95.*

Reviewed by TERRY EASTLAND

WHEN Ross Perot announced in July that he was ending (temporarily, as it turned out) his independent bid for the presidency, he claimed he was doing so because he could not win the election outright and his candidacy would throw the decision into the House of Representatives. Since the House was made up of Democrats and Republicans, he said, "our group would be unlikely to win."

The press at the time doubted that this was the real reason Perot was withdrawing. But there can be no doubt that the Electoral College, because it lets a House whose members are almost all Democrats and Republicans decide presidential elections when no candidate has an electoral majority, empowers the two major parties at the expense of other-party or independent challengers. This is ironic, since those who designed the Electoral College—the framers of the Constitution—did not intend or foresee the development of political parties. Were the Electoral College to be replaced by another method, such as one embracing proportional representation or one allowing for a second round in the general election, our two-party system would be a thing of the past.

But while the Electoral College is unlikely to be scrapped—it has survived periodic attacks—recent decades have, in fact, witnessed a serious weakening of the two major parties, a development which A. James Reichley of the Brookings Institution views with alarm. As he documents in *The Life of the Parties*, voters increasingly reject party labels and call themselves "independents"; they habitually split tickets; and they seem to like divided government, in which one party controls the presidency and the other the Congress, more than they do unified government, in which the same party controls both branches. Despite organizational strengths at the national level, parties seem weaker than ever at the

TERRY EASTLAND, *a fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C., is the author of* Energy in the Executive: The Case for the Strong Presidency.

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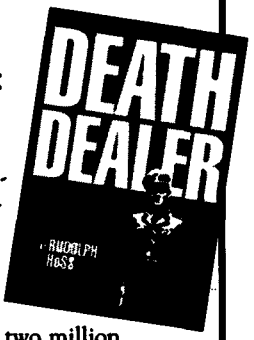

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local level, and paid political consultants, as opposed to career politicians who have worked their way up through the system, now tend to determine election strategy and issue selection.

Television, meanwhile, has taken over the communication role once held by party workers, and in several ways, including advertising, it has dramatically influenced election outcomes. The quadrennial presidential conventions, once the main event for the two parties, now are so anticlimactic that they command far less television coverage than they once did.

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In short, says Reichley, the parties

> are now in serious danger of losing influence and authority within government and the larger polity to mass-communications media, elected officeholders and their staffs, free-lance professional campaign consultants, specialized movements and causes, and fund-raising political action committees (PAC's) representing all kinds of interest groups.

Given the state of the parties today and their prospects, *The Life of the Parties* is an ironic title. But it is also a hopeful one, for Reichley proposes means of resuscitation.

To Reichley's credit, he understands that the problems of the parties are not treatable merely through the skillful application of modern political technologies. If the parties are to be strengthened, he contends, there will have to be much greater appreciation of them as organic institutions rooted in the beliefs and attitudes of the American people; there will have to be, in other words, much greater appreciation of the historical lives of the parties. To this appreciation Reichley attempts to contribute.

AS ANY such history must, Reichley's begins with the founders' well-known distrust of political parties and their belief in the ideal of a disinterested citizenry pursuing the common good. Despite that, ideological divisions developed in most of the states as early as the 1770's. The conservatives and populists, as Reichley calls them (although, as he notes, they did not use these names), supported republican government but split over the degree to which equality should be embraced. By the time of the Constitutional Convention, the conservatives were the Federalists and the populists the Anti-Federalists. Still, the Federalists of 1789, when George Washington took office, were not really a party as we know it but "a kind of committee or club formed to manage the national polity."

Opposition to the first administration's policies expressed itself in other clubs that took the names "Democratic" and "Republican"—there were 35 of these by the end of 1794. By 1800, this opposition had become known as Republicans, then as Democratic-Republicans and, in 1840, Democrats, their name today. While the Federalists eventually died out, opposition to the policies of President Andrew Jackson organized itself into the National Republican and eventually the Whig parties. Slavery fatally splitting the Whigs in the 1850's, today's Republican party was born.

WITH an eye for the telling fact, Reichley not only covers the familiar history of the two major parties, but also examines the other elements in a larger landscape—various third parties (such as the Populists of the 1890's), political movements (such as the Progressives of the early 1900's), and charismatic political careers (such as that of Huey Long in the 1930's). But the strength of Reichley's history lies in its theme—namely, that "the work and creed of American democracy have been carried forward by two great contending but not incompatible ideological traditions"—the "republican" and the "liberal."

While both are committed to individual liberty and constitutional democracy, these two traditions differ in the weight they give to public order and economic growth on the one hand, and economic and social equality on the other. And while both traditions have gained expression in minor parties and political movements, they have for the most part been reflected in the two major parties that have dominated American politics since the Civil War. Reichley traces the republican tradition through the Federalists, National Republicans, Whigs, and modern Republicans, and the liberal tradition through the Anti-Federalists, Democratic-Republicans, and modern Democrats.

The Life of the Parties impressively demonstrates how our enduring political questions have been engaged by the republican and liberal traditions as embodied in our two major parties. In Reichley's view, none of the alternatives

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would do this as well, if they were to do it at all. A one-party or a no-party system obviously would fail to reflect the full dimension and complexity of the democratic argument. And a no-party system, which is to say a system that necessarily would emphasize the strengths and talents of individuals, could facilitate the rise of politicians at the edge, or even outside, of our political traditions. Finally, a multiparty system, while better than a one- or no-party system because it would facilitate a range of ideological choice (a fuller range than the two-party system does), would make consensus that much harder to achieve.

In discussing proposals to strengthen the parties, Reichley acknowledges the effectiveness of patronage systems that once motivated grass-roots workers and disciplined elected officeholders, but also concedes their corruption and does not argue for their revival, which has almost no support anyway. He is right to advocate the deregulation of the parties, which work under state laws inspired by progressivism that intrude too deeply into their internal affairs. And he is also right to endorse the complete outlawing of PAC's, which distort the deliberative process and whose elimination would force candidates to rely on their parties to assist them in fund-raising.

REICHLEY also takes an appropriately dim view of the way we now nominate presidential candidates, a wacky system created by the McGovern-Fraser reforms of the early 1970's. There is, he thinks, nothing to be said for a process that makes staggered primaries all-important and reduces conventions to four-day photo-opportunities. Reichley, however, does not advocate returning to the days of "the smoke-filled room." Nor does he embrace a simple national primary, which he argues would further undermine the parties by increasing the candidate-orientation of our politics and the influence of PAC's, consultants, and interest groups.

Instead he recommends a system of delegate selection in which certain ranking officials (both elected and nonelected) would automatically be made delegates (roughly a third of the total) and in which voters, in state primaries held on the same day, could choose the rest. In most years, Reichley says, "support at the time of the primary would be divided among several candidates, and the nominating decision would go to the convention"—thus renewing it as an occasion for genuine deliberation. Because of the historic importance of conventions to the life of the parties, Reichley's proposal deserves a serious hearing.

One subject most relevant to strengthening the parties is beyond the scope of this comprehensive book, as Reichley recognizes. In recent years the leadership of both parties has been weak of mind and heart, failing to offer a sense of purpose that might challenge voters to end the current condition of divided government and determine the nation's political direction. Too often have ranking positions been filled with election strategists and technocrats when people of ideas and conviction have been needed. More than anything else, the quality of the life of the parties, and thus in turn the nature of the contribution they can make to our politics, will depend upon the kind of people at their head.

The Critic as Novelist

THE VOLCANO LOVER: A ROMANCE. By SUSAN SONTAG. *Farrar Straus Giroux. 419 pp. $22.00.*

Reviewed by EVELYN TOYNTON

SUSAN SONTAG arrived at her present intellectual eminence with the publication of her first collection of essays, *Against Interpretation* (1966), a consideration of such chic cultural phenomena as happenings, the *nouveau roman*, French movies, and camp. In the title essay of that book, she argued for a radical new approach to art, one in which the emphasis would be on form rather than content. Interpretation, she declared, was "reactionary, impertinent, cowardly, stifling" (note the list of adjectives, a characteristic mannerism); the important thing was to "recover our senses . . . to see more, to hear more, to feel more."

At the time, this essay, like the book as a whole, was seen as a liberating force, a romantic rallying cry for the avant-garde to emancipate art from the shackles of fusty meaning. But for all its surface glitter, there was something peculiarly sterile in the kind of romanticism Sontag espoused. In its way, it was a debased reworking of the *esthétique préçieuse* of Walter Pater, that guru of the English Decadence, and like Pater's exhortation to "burn always with [a] hard, gem-like flame," it proved to be something of a dead end.

Yet in her criticism over the years, Sontag has remained largely faithful to that early creed, in the sense that she does not perceive her function as one of uncovering meaning; her essays do not plunge into the depths so much as skate imperiously over the surface. The work of interpreting, with its connotation of a journey toward revelation, obliges the critic to pursue a line of reasoning, construct an argument; this Sontag has never done. She proceeds, in her criticism, not by argument but by assertion, delivering a series of judgments and pronouncements to which the reader is expected to submit without question. For all her defense of various types of freedom, hers is a curiously dictatorial voice.

Now, however, Sontag has written a novel that would appear to be a grand departure from all her earlier work—her stylized experimental fiction as well as her acclaimed nonfiction. Not only does she call it a romance, but she was at some pains to make clear, in an adulatory article about her in the New York *Times Magazine*, that writing this book was an act of pure love—no sort of intellectual exercise whatsoever. Certainly, those reviewers who have enthused over the novel in the pages of *Vanity Fair* and elsewhere have expressed delight at the incongruity of her subject: the famously scandalous, early-19th-century romance be-

EVELYN TOYNTON *has published reviews in the Washington* Post, *the* American Scholar, *and elsewhere.*

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tween Lady Emma Hamilton, flamboyant young wife of the elderly British envoy to the Court of the Two Sicilies, and Lord Horatio Nelson, England's greatest naval hero. We are meant to understand that there is something particularly endearing about such a rigorously postmodern intellectual expending her talents on this old-fashioned historical subject.

And the story is indeed a colorful one, rich in comedy as well as pathos. Emma, the exuberant daughter of a village blacksmith, was originally sent to Sir William Hamilton in Naples as a bribe, or so it was said: a profligate nephew of Sir William's, unable to pay his debts to his uncle, shipped off his pretty young mistress instead. When she arrived in Naples, accompanied by her illiterate mother, Sir William—a widower thirty-six years her senior, a fastidious aesthete and art collector, as well as the volcano lover of Sontag's title (he made over twenty ascents of Mount Vesuvius while in Italy)—set about having her tutored in gentlewomanly subjects like music and Italian and art. She would dance and sing for his guests, dress up in elaborate costumes and strike "attitudes" based on mythological figures; a shameless flatterer, a bit of a drunk, she was endlessly gossiped about by the visiting English, while the normally reticent William openly adored her.

Twelve years after Emma's arrival, Nelson showed up in Naples, ill and exhausted, having just lost his arm and suffered a head wound in battle; Lady Emma and her mother nursed him back to health, and he began going about everywhere with the Hamiltons, the three of them singing one another's praises. It was the only time that Nelson neglected his duties, or his wife at home. According to the hand-wringing English version of the story (at least until the revisionist movie of 1941, *That Hamilton Woman*, starring Laurence Olivier and Vivian Leigh), Emma was a sorceress who bewitched the great man, and was to blame both for his idleness and for the uncharacteristic ferocity with which he put down a republican uprising in Naples. (The normally kindly Nelson issued summary orders for the execution of the aristocratic republicans.)

The Hamiltons and Nelson then returned to England together; after Nelson's final break with his wife, the three even shared a house, from which Emma's and Nelson's daughter was spirited away hours after her birth, in order to spare Sir William's feelings. The lovers presided jointly over Sir William's deathbed, and then lived together openly in the rare intervals when Nelson was not off at sea battling Napoleon's navy. On the eve of the Battle of Trafalgar, he wrote a will pleading with his king and countrymen to look after his dear Emma and their daughter in the event of his death—a request they conspicuously ignored, while erecting countless monuments to his memory.

THIS is the story Susan Sontag tells—a romance, indeed. But the technique she employs in the novel is curiously similar to that of her criticism: despite the inherent drama of the narrative, the book proceeds less as a series of events and encounters than as a string of verdicts and summations, observations and pronouncements. And again, there is no attempt to plumb the depths, to reveal the characters' inner lives.

Indeed, the characters remain amalgams of superficial mental traits, occasions for aphorism: "A star, unlike an actress, always wants to be recognized." "A hero is one who knows how to leave, to break ties." But unlike Montaigne's epigrams, or even Oscar Wilde's, Sontag's have no ring of truth; they are maxims in search of a meaning. (Would it not sound just as convincing to say, "A hero is one who *never* breaks ties, who always returns home"?) This is minimalist fiction presented in maximalist fashion, elaborating endlessly on its themes without ever heading for the interior.

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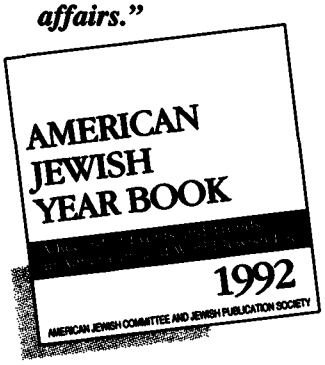

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In dealing with Sir William, for example—and the first third of the book is largely taken up with describing "the Cavaliere's" daily life before the arrival of Emma in Naples—we get dozens of passages like this:

> The collector's impulse does not encourage the lust to understand or transform. Collecting is a form of union. The collector is acknowledging. He is adding. He is learning. He is noting.

For all the rhetorical flourishes, the wisdom-dispensing tone, this is just portentous hot air. (Indeed, it sounds less like Proust than like Joan Didion on a bad day: "Boca Grande is. Boca Grande was. Boca Grande shall be." Etc.) And nowhere do we get a depiction of Hamilton's immediate sensations as he makes an acquisition—the one thing that might have brought us to empathize with this figure at least briefly, to feel something toward him other than supercilious detachment.

But if Sontag never allows Sir William to breathe, she is infinitely kinder to him than to Nelson—always referred to in the book as "the Hero." So in fact he was known in England, where even today pubs all over his native Norfolk still carry signs of him bearing that legend. Sontag, however, uses the epithet in a purely sarcastic sense. Of all the judgments rendered in this novel, none is more righteous or more final than the condemnation of Nelson's conduct during the Neapolitan revolt—if there is one thing bound to provoke Sontag's leftist ire, it is the suppression of a republican uprising. Yet her portrayal seems tinged with a certain personal spite as well.

Perhaps Sontag is affronted by the sheer roast-beef Englishness of Nelson (she is a great lover of all things French), or perhaps the virtues he possessed—fierce courage, a high degree of independence—are simply outside her sphere of interest. There are no elegant discriminations to be made about physical bravery; one can only feel a certain humility before it, and that Sontag is incapable of—just as she is incapable of showing us what might have gone on in the mind of someone like Nelson when he was standing on deck with cannonballs whizzing around him; or climbing into a ship unaided, his shattered arm dangling at his side, after stopping his small boat to pick up wounded crew members floating in the water.

Emma fares much better here. Not only does Sontag seem to approve of her more than she does of the others—presenting her as a generous spirit rather than the slut of English morality tales, and as a victim of various injustices perpetrated on females in a male society—but, toward the end of the book, she even gives us a glimpse into Emma's consciousness, unmediated by the narrator's insistently knowing voice. In a brief, moving scene, as Emma is dancing in a drunken frenzy before Sir William's horrified guests, Sontag suddenly gives her a voice of her own—wild with sorrow and defiance, ardent in just the way Emma ought to be. For almost the first time, the novel comes alive. Later still, Emma's ignorant, doting mother takes over briefly to tell the story in her own words, and once again we actually feel the presence of a live human being.

BUT in the end, apart from some vivid images of street scenes in Naples, of a rampaging mob, of Sir William's pathetic pet monkey, and of Emma dancing, the strongest impression one takes away from this book is of the suffocatingly humorless presence of Susan Sontag.

She has become by now a virtual icon of Mind, the ultimate "glamorous intellectual," as *Vanity Fair* puts it. Yet her chief strength may lie in nothing much more than the ability to assume a voice of authority at all times. In the case of *The Volcano Lover*, what this produces is a solemn rather than a serious novel, in which portentous observations are made in the tone of someone offering a glimpse of the Holy Grail.

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